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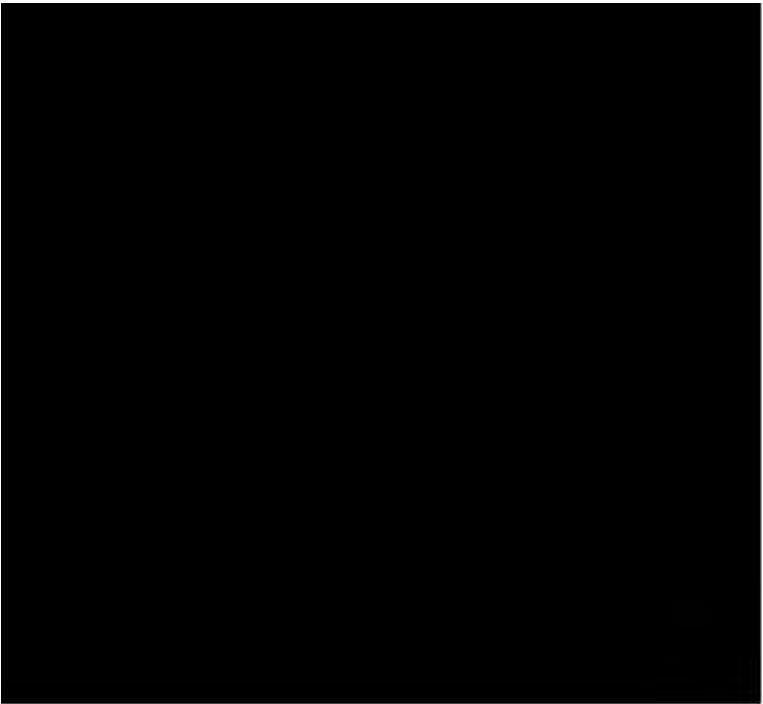
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ISIDORA
OR THE
ADVENTURES OF A NEAPOLITAN.

A NOVEL,

BY
THE OLD AUTHOR,
IN A NEW WALK.

AUTHOR OF "THE POPE AND THE COLONNAS,"
&c. &c. &c.

"C'EST L'AMOUR, L'AMOUR, L'AMOUR
QUE FAIT LE MONDE À LA RONDE."

IN THREE VOLUMES.
VOL. I.

LONDON:
SAUNDERS AND OTLEY, CONDUIT STREET.

1841.





SOMETHING
TO BE READ FIRST.

OUR worthy and respected publishers had, again and again, urged us to put our name to this work as a powerful means of securing its success. Flattering temptation to our vanity!—but which left us still obdurate, and resolved not to cast aside our mask and domino. We were, nevertheless, inclined to indulge their wishes in some degree by inscribing our pages to a much valued literary friend—at whose hospitable board we delight

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to meet those whose award is fame—and to request him to vouch for our respectability.

“Introduce us to the public,” we thought of saying to him ; “introduce us without divulging our name.”

“Without telling your name?” he would have exclaimed. “Impossible!”

“Nothing more easy, we assure you,” we would have answered. “That the names of parties brought together in social introductory

once the best friends in the world on the faith of him who has inaudibly murmured our name."

Such was the plan on which we had nearly determined—notwithstanding the backwardness of our friend, who scarcely liked to trust himself in unknown company—when we rejected it, lest our identity should be guessed through him with whom we owned companionship. That a man is known by his friends is an old proverb: and we began to despair of being able in any way to meet the wishes of our publishers, when the question suddenly suggested itself—why not make the very M.C.'s of the literary world vouch for our respectability in the world—of letters? *Their* authority, we all know, is unimpeachable. *They* never make mistakes in the character of those whom they introduce. And besides:

they are all engaged to dine with us once a fortnight during the ensuing session, when our parliamentary duties will enable us to testify our gratitude. They have heretofore given us flattering letters of introduction to the public: let us reprint these letters and make them answer the double end of telling our readers who we are, and of reminding the writers of them that they are pledged to maintain that we are, in every way, worthy of the friendly greeting of those over whom they have influence.

Thus then wrote some of the most popular of the Masters of Ceremonies of the reading public in reference to our last work—of fiction.

“‘The Pope’ is a work of great merit: we recommend it to our readers as one from which much amusement may be derived.”—*Literary Gazette*.

“We are much pleased with this ‘novel’ production

of an 'old author;' and hope to meet him very often in the 'new walk' which he has chosen,"—*Edinburgh Observer*.

"It is impossible to read the volumes before us without forming a high opinion of the author's talents and accomplishments. He is a sound and excellent scholar; possessed of extensive and various knowledge, the fruit both of reading and observation; and in particular thoroughly conversant with the literature and arts of Italy in its second Augustan age—the sixteenth century. In applying these acquirements to the production of an historical novel, he has not (as is so generally done) made a display of information evidently 'crammed' for the occasion. He appears to have such a command of his materials, and uses them with so much fulness and freedom, that we feel that he is drawing from the abundance of his own stores and treading ground familiar to him."—*Spectator*.

"This is a very ambitious title, but we think that the author has fully justified his high aspirations by the excellence of his performance. We deliberately assure our friends that this work is one of no common description; and if the author be not very unfortunate, he will be very successful."—*Metropolitan*.

"We do not know who this 'old author' is, although we have no doubt his name, or at any rate his works in

some other walk than that of the historical novel, are sufficiently public. Whatever he has written, we are sure (he could not help it did he try) exhibits the scholar, the man of extensive, varied, and accurate information, and the connoisseur who has made literature and art the subjects of close and critical study. He possesses the skill and the taste that prevent an accomplished author from affecting prominence and brilliancy—an excellence which can only arise from wealth of ideas, abundant stores of knowledge and chastened style.”—*Monthly Review*.

Now what can be more flattering than these

insinuate that, talented and highly-gifted as they rightly deem us, we have failed in the more mechanical process of constructing an interesting plot. But we forbear, in courtesy; and pardon the only slight misapprehension which has clouded their otherwise-excellent judgment of us and of our work. "The Book is a provoking book," says the editor of the *Athenæum*: "it is obviously written by a very clever man, and, as obviously it is not a clever book." Not a clever book! Too harsh, by Jupiter, friend *Athenæum*! Not a clever book indeed,—that is to say, not a clever plot! Too harsh by Jove, friend *Athenæum*! You see too far into a millstone to be able to give an opinion on the matter to others who are less clear-sighted. Know that a plot may be uninteresting to you and to other great literary characters such as you

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who know something of the history of the world: but it was for the mass of novel readers that we wrote, and according to the exact admeasurement which we had taken of their historical lore. *You* knew what de Bourbon was about to do when he marched upon Florence and Rome: but the foolometer by whose judgment we rule—our lines, knew no more of the matter than the babe unborn. She believed all the historical incidents which

we introduced to be pure fictions: and to

What say you to that, Mr. Athenæum and Mr. Any-body-else who think that, because you and those about you happen to know a thing or two, all the rest of the world is equally well informed? Talk of the world being governed by little wisdom!—the world of letters is governed by wisdom too exalted to appreciate its wants.*

But oh, friend EXAMINER, thine was the unkindest cut of all! Thou didst praise "some very good verses scattered through the volumes;" and assuming that we might


* It may be as well to assure those who have not seen "The Pope" that it is not a religious or controversial novel. In fact, the title was ill-chosen: and in all the future editions, which will be eagerly called for, we purpose to designate it "The Colonnas:" Messrs. Saunders and Otley will attend to any orders for it under that name as quickly as the great and increasing demand for the work will permit them to do so.

have heretofore distinguished ourselves as one of the "Sons of Song," thou didst strive to inveigle us to retune the harp and once more strike its sweet responsive strings. Insidious counsellor! Perfidious guide to irredeemable oblivion! Even were thy supposition correct, thou well-knowest that no one, in these days, would listen to the most thrilling appeals of poesy! Thou well knowest that verses—even verses such as ours—verses inspired by the soul of Apollo and sung to the harp of Orpheus—would be scorned by an egotistical age! The world has now "no music in itself:" hence all the treasons, stratagems, conspiracies, accusations and contested elections which have distracted the country and occasioned the delay which has followed the first announcement of the appearance of these volumes:—for our pub-

lishers rightly judged that, while the kingdom was convulsed by a general election, our work could not receive that exclusive and all-engrossing attention to which they knew it to be fully entitled.

Such matters, however, will soon draw to a close; and we know not that we can do better than recommend all parties to cast aside the bitter animosities, the feverish excitement of the committee room and of the hustings, and to seek in our pages assuagement, consolation, entertainment and oblivion. These volumes are neutral ground, on which all may meet, forgetful of electioneering squabbles; and, with advantage to themselves and to the author, turn over a new leaf.

And now begging to thank our returning officers, the reviewers, for their impartial conduct, and to assure our constituents, the



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public, that it will be our constant endeavour
to merit their approbation and confidence, we
remain their obliged and devoted servant

THE OLD AUTHOR.

7th July, 1841.



ISIDORA.

CHAPTER I.

THE BULL FIGHT.

"Thrice sounds the clarion; lo! the signal falls,
The den expands, and Expectation mute
Gapes round the silent circle's peopled walls.
Bounds with one lashing spring the mighty brute,
And, wildly staring, spurns, with sounding foot,
The sand, nor blindly rushes on his foe:
Here, there, he points his threatening front, to suit
His first attack, wide waving to and fro
His angry tail; red rolls his eye's dilated glow."

BYRON.

TIER above tier, uprose the vast amphitheatre.
From its crowded seats, full ten thousand eager
and delighted Castilians gazed down on the
bloody arena. High and low, dons, grandees,
priests, beggars, and tradespeople, shared with
hundreds of tender-hearted women the excite-

ment of the ungentle sport. The constable of the amphitheatre had, long since, received from the president the key of the bull's den. Long since, had the cries of "Toro! Ha, Toro!" which had greeted the appearance of the first infuriated brute, subsided into gratified expectation and eager delight. Long since, had the only feeling of regret which had clouded the opening sports—the regret that their youthful Emperor, Charles V., displeased by some pretension of his haughty subjects, had refused to attend the exhibition—long since had this slight cloud passed from the minds of the spectators. Five bulls had been already slaughtered with his usual dexterity by Toledo's far-famed Matadore. Three horses had been already gored to death by the infuriated animals. Bugles had sounded; flags had waved: cheers and counter cheers had hailed the success or the defeat of the favourite bulls whose race was indicated by the ribbands of various colours attached to their shaggy manes. From

the highborn, dashing, and sporting characters in the lowest range of seats, whence they could best note the skill of the actors, to the tiers above them, crowded with the noisy population of the streets—on, on—higher and more high—the noise, the triumph, the delight ascended, till it was joined in, swelled and re-echoed by the great nobles and the enraptured and enrapturing ladies who from the topmost range of seats, where a gay awning sheltered them from the rays of the sun, gazed over the countless throng upon the busy scene in the pit. The old Moorish walls of Toledo shook with the boisterous swell of applause; and the waters of the glorious Tagus glittered in the noon-day sun and seemed to be radiant with the delight which delighted all around.

Suddenly there was a pause in the mighty hubbub. Each one arose in his place and gazed on tiptoe with silent expectation. A slaughtered bull was dragged off, unnoticed by the throng, by the gaily-caparisoned mules: and

no applauding cheer rewarded the ever-skilful Matadore. But quickly was heard the sound of approaching military music. Quickly uprose, from the assembled lower orders, repeated cries of "Long live the King of Castile!" "Long live the Emperor!" shouted the nobility—bestowing upon Charles the proud empty title he had lately acquired in Germany, rather than the one which more immediately affected themselves, and his right to the which they still disputed.

The wily and sagacious monarch had brought his bitter feelings into subjection : had resolved to conceal his resentment and to court the favour of his subjects by joining in their sport. Amid flattering acclamation, the youthful king; the elected emperor; the victor of Pavia; the conqueror of Rome, took his place in the tumultuary assemblage.

Again the sports of the day proceeded. Mounted upon horses which appeared to have been selected with a view to the dangers to

which they themselves were about to be exposed rather than to those from which their riders were to be saved by their means, mounted upon these miserable but gaily-caparisoned horses, the two bodies of Toreros, bedecked in closely-fitting jackets of green and scarlet satin, advanced and bowed to the royal balcony as humbly as was permitted to them by their saddles which rose nearly as high as their breasts and shoulders. They then drew aside ; and, with less anxiety than appeared to be felt by the assembled thousands, awaited until a new victim should be turned loose upon them. So long had the sports proceeded before the arrival of the sovereign, that one only now remained in the den. But the stewards of the day congratulated themselves that they had reserved a most noble animal with which to conclude the sports—an old bull of the most famous breed in far-famed Andalusia, who had been often baited by his noble owner in the court of his castle, and

reserved, time after time, on account of the excellent sport which he had ever exhibited.

With tail erect lashing the air, and bellowing so that some of the gentle and noble maidens of Toledo turned pale on their lofty seats, the wild animal dashed triumphantly into the arena. Cheers of approval uprose from all around: and the cries and the whistling usual on such occasions urged on his native fury.

Such incentives, however, were far from needed. A moment he paused in the centre of the pit and glared savagely about him; then dashed, at full speed, against the nearest mounted Torero. But the noble adversary whom he had selected, had been long noted for his prowess in such encounters. Striking his spear into the leathery flesh of the animal's neck, he gracefully, but yet suddenly, wheeled his horse aside, so that the bull rushed on some paces further ere it was able to check its headlong impulse. Again, however, it

stopped ; pawed the ground with its fore feet ; bellowed furiously ; and erecting its shaggy tail, rushed upon another horseman. Again and again was the same manœuvre repeated ; and although, occasionally, a horse might be gored while making the demi-volte aside, yet again and again were fresh wounds inflicted in the same fleshy part of the tortured animal's neck. Never was seen more exquisite sport ! and rapturous was the applause that arose from all around ! The poor beast, however, did not appear so much to enjoy the exhibition : maddened, no less by the pain than by the treacherous manœuvre by which its adversaries evaded its attacks, it rushed blindly upon the last remaining cavalier, without giving notice by the accustomed pause and the deadly "point." Horse and rider were overthrown in an instant ; and repeatedly were the horns of the infuriated monster buried in the gushing entrails of the steed. The terrified rider, having lost all presence of mind,

instead of lying quietly prostrate and allowing the bull to vent its rage on the horse until it should be driven off by his companions, attempted to rise, and thus drew that rage upon himself. No sooner had he gained his knees, than the horns of the animal were in his bowels; and, the next instant, he was cast into the air, and fell, apparently lifeless, beyond the barrier.

One single shriek arose from a richly-dressed female whose features were concealed by the usual veil; and while the spectators nearest to the wounded man cried out that he was not dead, applauding cheers arose from the gratified thousands as the Bandarilleros rushed in on foot to take the place of the wearied horsemen.

This part of the tragedy was more immediately calculated for the amusement of the people. A dozen light figures began to flit before the wearied monarch of the Andalusian herds; each waving two little javelins, upon

which small flags and gay streamers fluttered. They had no arms; and the bull seemed to think that an easy victory was before him. He rushed at the nearest flag-bearer: the man moved not: but, when the horns were within six inches of his knees, he leaned aside and thrust both his barbed javelins firmly behind the ears of his victim. With a sudden jerk, the bull cast up its head, and tried to shake off the new annoyance: this anticipated movement enabled the Bandarillero to skip aside unharmed; and he gaily laughed as a squib, that had been fixed in the point of the javelin, was touched by a concealed match and brightly exploded. Gaily, too, exploded the applause of the gratified spectators.

With more or less success, the same trick was repeated by the other flag-bearers. Two of them, indeed, failed in their attempt to fix the dart at the proper moment; and had to fly for their lives from their enraged pursuer.

The manner in which one of them doubled from his foe afforded much amusement: but the lofty barrier which enclosed the arena, and over which the other of these unskilful performers lightly bounded, did not save him from the fury which it had been the aim of all to excite. Over leaped the discomfited *Bandarillero*, and over also thundered the enraged animal; and, falling heavily on the other side, crushed, with its enormous weight, the wretched man whom it so closely pursued.

This not very unusual event, damped, in some slight degree, the spirits of the more thoughtful of the spectators: and as it was agreed, on all hands, that never bull had offered more splendid sport, the president of the amphitheatre enquired of his "*Majesty*,"—a newly-invented name by which Charles chose to be addressed—whether he might be permitted to call upon the far-famed *Matadore*, *Rodriguez*, to shew his skill. To this the Emperor, to whom his Flemish education and calculating

habits of mind, had given no great relish for such sports, readily assented; and the bugles sounded the signal of death, and Rodriguez confidently stepped into the arena. Throwing his loose cloak to his attendants, several of whom confidently followed him into the pit, he advanced with no other arm than a long dagger in his right hand. But, in the left, he bore that which was to make that dagger all-sufficient in his practised hands. To a little square piece of red cloth spread upon a lath, he confidently entrusted his life.

The long-tortured animal had now begun to think its combats at an end, when the executioner advanced towards it with a light and fearless step. Yet were there those who thought the bearing of Rodriguez to be more careless than the occasion warranted. He was evidently excited by the thought of exhibiting his skill, for the first time, before an Emperor; and he moved jauntily and heedlessly to his task.

“Have a care, Rodriguez!”

“Heed the bull, friend, not the Emperor!” exclaimed voices from the lower range of seats, which, we have before said, were chiefly occupied by what we should now call the sporting young nobility of the country. Rodriguez, however, vauntingly tossed his head; and advanced to within a few yards of the observant bull. Before his person, he held out the red cloth; behind his right thigh, he concealed the strong dagger. The bull came thundering on. Slipping aside so soon as those fearful horns were entangled in the cloth, the executioner had intended to deal to the infuriated animal his death wound as he passed. But the want of caution, which his friends had remarked, here betrayed the bold Matadore. His foot slipped; and he fell prostrate before his adversary. Ere twenty seconds had elapsed, the horns were imbedded in his chest.

A shriek of horror uprose around: for all

saw that the wound was instantly mortal; and the hitherto unrivalled Rodriguez had been a general favourite. But not alone on his own account was this sympathy expressed. We have said that several attendants had followed the slain executioner; two young lads, his sons, and the young marquis of Mirandola had also entered the arena behind him. All these were unarmed, and had confided in the well-known skill, in the hitherto unfailing blow of their patron. All these were exposed to the fury of the frantic brute whose death was to have exalted that skill still higher. All saw the danger; and many an exclamation to many a saint prayed for a rescue which none dared to expect.

That rescue was, however, at hand. Amongst the young *Hidalgos* who occupied the lowest seats, was one who, during the whole of the performance, had stood rather aloof from the others. This appeared not to be so much the effect of shyness or reserve as that he was a

stranger to the rest, and perhaps, even to the country. His appearance was remarkable from the grave cast of his countenance ; from the elegance of his slight, but well-knit limbs ; from the beautiful regularity of his small features ; and from the fairness of his complexion, which although not such as would be called fair in these northern climates, was much less dark than that of the mahogany-coloured Spaniards around him. His small light brown moustaches and waving ringlets were nurtured with a care and attention that well set off his very distinguished features. His age might be between twenty and five-and-twenty years.

“Take my cloak, Bernardo,” exclaimed the person we have attempted to describe, hastily unclasping a garment of black velvet from his shoulders.

“Nay, Signor,” expostulated the follower whom he addressed.

“Bah !” said the youth, unbuckling his

sword, and throwing it also to his servant. "I may not see those people gored before mine eyes."

"But the hat, the hat, Eccellenza;" exclaimed the man: "the hat with the richest carcanet in all Toledo! Leave it with me, for the love of God! Fool!" muttered the follower to himself, as his master lightly leaped the barrier: "fool! to carry such a jewel to be trampled upon by a mad bull!"

Meanwhile, all heedless of such considerations, the young man whom we have noted, and whose handsome person, as well as the splendid chain that looped up his spreading hat, had drawn other eyes than ours to him throughout the morning—had vaulted over the barrier into the arena at the moment when, leaving the dead body of the slaughtered Matadore, the bull was about to turn its rage upon his unarmed companions. Stealthily advancing behind the tortured and bleeding animal, the young man reached, un-

perceived by it, the spot where lay the body of Toledo's late champion ; and eagerly seized the dagger which had escaped from his hand at the moment of his fall. Every soul in the amphitheatre watched his motion with breathless anxiety. Some thought it was a comrade of the slain man, who had come to take his place : while the more regular attendants on such sports were at fault on beholding one, as yet undistinguished by them, rush thus unprepared upon most imminent danger. Silence reigned around : save that, when the stranger grasped the recovered dagger, and turned him to confront the bull, a few voices harshly whispered "The cloth ! Take the cloth ! You can do nothing without the cloth !"

The youth, however, stirred not. He waited steadily when he stood, until the beast should have selected its prey. This was soon done. It rushed furiously upon the young Marquis of Mirandola whose gaudy dress attracted its eye. The boy fled screaming. The stranger

champion followed the bull with his steady glance, while he poised the dagger by the point in his right hand. The horns were already lowered for the fatal blow ; when that dagger was jerked into the air, and fell with such sure aim upon the mortal part—the vertebræ where the back joins the neck—that the huge beast suddenly stumbled in his mad career, and fell dead behind his intended victim.

Redoubled shouts of applause rent the welkin. All in the amphitheatre uprose ; and with waving of handkerchiefs and triumphant acclamations, greeted the youthful stranger. An officer approached him on the part of the Emperor ; and intimated that his "Majesty," commanded his attendance on his return to the palace. Again, all around congratulated him ; for titles of honour, or other marks of distinction, were often given to reward prowess in the amphitheatre.

The exhibitions were over ; and all arose to

depart:—declaring that never had any one animal given them so much sport, as they had that day received from the old bull of Andalusia.

CHAPTER II.

THE GRANDEE OF SPAIN.

"Tel qu'à vagues épandues
Marche un fleuve impérieux,
De qui les neiges fondues
Rendent le cours furieux,
Tel, et plus épouvantable
S'en allait ce conquérant
A son pouvoir indomtable
Sa colère mésurant."

MALHERBE.

GLITTERING and gorgeous was the cavalcade which accompanied the monarch on his return from the amphitheatre. Charles himself rode a war-horse splendidly caparisoned. Behind him, on coal black jennets of beautiful proportions but of diminutive breed, followed the two young sons of Francis King of France, who had been sent to the court of the victor as hostages that their father would fulfil the

hard conditions which had been imposed upon him during his lengthened imprisonment after the rout of Pavia. These conditions still remained, as they were ever destined to remain, unfulfilled, and the young princes still lingered in the foreign land from which their father had been reluctantly liberated. Nobles and plebeians of every class, crowded around the sovereign; who, acting upon the conciliatory plan which he had adopted in the earlier part of the day, laboured to bear himself with graceful condescension towards grandees, who offended his pride by an assumption of independence and of comparative equality, and towards a people whose turbulent and free-born spirit, it was already the settled purpose of his soul to overcome and tame.

Among the throng of courtiers, the young stranger champion of the amphitheatre was also borne along: but although many of the lovers of the circus pressed anxiously round him and offered their congratulations and

their friendship, and although several of the greater nobles condescended to notice him with commending enquiries, the youth still maintained the same courteous but grave expression of countenance which he had exhibited throughout the day ; and received the applauses of all with a polished and reserved manner which instantly checked all approach to familiarity, and increased the wonder which his daring conduct had already excited.

Scarcely, however, had the royal cavalcade entered the second street, when some confusion manifested itself at the head of the glittering procession ; and many a tumultuary cry soon enabled our stranger to understand the cause of that irregularity which he could but imperfectly behold.

"The Duke del Infantado !" shouted many a voice from among the people.

"Viva the defender of the liberties of Castile !" exclaimed some of the minor *Hidalgos*, as the proud nobleman, followed by

an obsequious train, issued from a cross street upon that one along which the Emperor was advancing.

"The King! way for his majesty!" shouted some of the royal followers, pushing violently forward.

The duke steadily pursued his own course; and crossing the king's path at right angles, effectually hindered his advance for the moment. Charles would willingly have allowed this gross disrespect to pass unnoticed, so anxious was he to unite the energies of his subjects for some of the grand schemes of extended empire which he even then meditated: but an officious servant marred his prudent resolves.

"Way! way for his majesty!" shouted some of his more determined adherents. The Duke of Infantado moved slowly on: nay he even appeared to draw in the silken reins of his charger, as he neared the middle of the street in front of his sovereign. It could not

be expected that the Emperor's guards should draw back: they still moved forward at the same pace, until one of them, reaching the place where the duke stood almost immoveable, struck with his mace the fiery horse, and made it bound instantly onwards.

"Fool!" exclaimed the King. "Some one order him to put up his staff!"

"Sangue de Dios!" cried the duke, his haughty features mantling with rage as he reined in his fretted steed; "whose caitiff art thou who darest to strike the horse of a grandee of Castile?"

His sword was forthwith drawn; and the officious guardsman was as quickly laid low beneath the feet of the surrounding cavalcade.

"Nay, by the three kings of Cologne," cried Charles, using an imprecation which the land of his education had made familiar to him; "By the three kings of Cologne, this insolence is not to be borne. Arrest him, Ronquillo; we charge thee, on the instant. He shall

dearly answer for his daring attack upon our follower."

Timidly did the Judge of the Court advance to execute an order of which he well knew the peril: timidly he pushed up to the enraged duke, and intimated to him his majesty's pleasure. But his message was cut short by a more determined character, who, quitting the side of Charles, near whom he had hitherto ridden, took his place beside del Infantado.

"To arrest me, sayest thou?" cried the duke.

"Pardon me, your grace;" calmly added the new champion, who had passed over to him: "Pardon me, that I interfere in this matter. Tell your master, his highness," he continued, raising his voice so that all could hear, "tell him that, as constable of Castile, I claim jurisdiction over a matter which affects the liberty of a grandee of Spain. I will be answerable for the appearance of the duke to meet any charge."

"Long life to the brave constable!" "The Duke del Infantado for ever!" "Hurrah for the defender of the liberties of Castile!" exclaimed many a plebeian and many a right-noble throat. In a few seconds, the apparently obsequious throng of nobility which had attended the Emperor from the circus, had glided from his side and ranged themselves around the man of their order, around him who was known most to strive to check the despotic aspirations of his sovereign. The example of the great is contagious: in a few minutes, not a single Hidalgo of any grade remained beside the youthful monarch.

"Constable, I am your prisoner," said the Duke offering his sword with proud humility. "Whither shall I have the honour of attending you?"

"It needs not;" replied the other refusing the proffered sword. "I trust that my poor house may be able to accommodate your lordship."

Bending the plume in his hat in one triumphant and most lowly reverence, the duke again put his horse in motion; and at the slowest possible pace, continued his way across the street. Hundreds now thronged around him: all those who had hitherto escorted the king, joined in procession around the subject; and repeated cries in favour of the duke, of the ancient constitution, and of the country uprose from the rebellious crowd as they slowly passed out of sight along the transverse street.

The Emperor was left alone where he stood. Not one of his court, save the Cardinal of Tavera, was near him. Severely he struggled with his own nature, and severely he strove to appear to regard the whole action as unimportant. He looked boldly yet anxiously around him. The unknown champion of the amphitheatre rode a few paces behind.

"What, art thou here, friend?" he exclaimed with forced hilarity. "In faith, we cannot

call ourselves ill accompanied when a prelate so eminent as the Cardinal and a champion so bold as thyself are beside us. We are truly thankful to our good subjects for having left us the greatest ornaments of the Spanish church and of the Spanish circus. Move we forward, however;" he added as he put his horse into quicker motion.

The diminished escort advanced towards the palace.

"We marvel," continued Charles, "that such admirers of the noble sports we have just witnessed as be these our dutiful subjects could quit so great a favourite as thou didst now appear to be to follow a new idol. Half an hour ago, we began to grow jealous of thy popularity: but we confided in the instability of mob favour: and we were not disappointed."

"Truly," said the Cardinal, humouring the turn which the monarch chose to give to the late occurrence; "truly it needed so great a

favourite as the Duke del Infantado to draw away these keen sportsmen from one who has so much distinguished himself as this fair youth."

"We must make amends to thee," resumed Charles, "for whatever disappointment thou mayest have sustained from their fickle conduct. Who and whence art thou?"

"A faithful subject of your Majesty in the kingdom of Naples. The name of Procida may not be quite new to your Majesty's ears."

"Procida," repeated Charles musing: "did not such an one distinguish himself under the Great Captain?"

"My father, your grace. In his name, in the name of whatever little services the Count of Procida may have rendered in that war, his son has sought Spain to find justice at the feet of your Majesty."

But Charles was fast sinking into deep meditation on the tumult which we have recorded and which he had striven to appear to think

so lightly of. The last words of the stranger were scarcely heeded.

"The Count of Procida," he repeated in a thoughtless and pre-occupied tone to himself as he rode up to the fortified gates of his palace. Then, as he passed under the embattled portal, he added with his usual calm and collected manner, "Attend our court to-morrow: we have now other matter in hand. Cardinal, a word with you."

The guards of the palace closed around the portals as the sovereign entered; and Alfonso of Procida rejoined his servant and sought his own humble quarters in the city.

CHAPTER III.

THE EMPEROR.

" Trust not in kings, 'tis said ; but we
Would ask in whom our trust should be ?
Are kings more false than others ? No !
Men, women, children, high or low,
Rich, poor, young, old—are any true ?

the principal furniture; "Well, reverend father, have you expressed to this haughty duke our regret that one of our followers should have dared to strike his charger, and our proposal to deliver the poor fellow over to him for punishment?"

"I have, my liege: and I rejoice that the prudent step which your majesty has adopted will have the effect of preventing further dissatisfaction, or perhaps rebellion, on the part of these factious nobles. I gave your conciliatory message, and the Duke del Infantado forgave your poor follower at once; and sent one of his household to him with a considerable present as some compensation for the wounds which he had inflicted upon him."

"Generous and forgiving person!" exclaimed the Emperor with bitterness. "But we must dissemble, Cardinal; until we have prepared the rod with which to teach these overgrown infants to know their master.

Would that Ximenes had been with us in this strait!"

"The Duke del Infantado bade me also state to your Majesty that he would hasten to pay his homage to you ere the day were an hour older."

"We are doubly honoured," replied Charles, "both that he forgives us for the insult which he offered us, and that he is now about to claim the right to repeat it on the first occasion."

After a pause, the Cardinal added, "Sire, the brave Neapolitan youth whom you ordered to seek your presence this morning, awaits in the ante-room."

"And there awaits alone, I warrant it!" cried Charles. "None of the Spanish nobility will honour our court until they hear that we have begged pardon of their champion. But admit the stranger at once."

"Well, fair Sir," he continued as the young man entered the room, and rendered the usual

homage, "let us hear thy petition: although the Emperor has so little to bestow that, as thou seest, none here, save thyself, think it worth their while to seek his presence."

"Permit me, my liege, to think rather," replied the youth, "that your Majesty has so truly administered justice, during the short years of your glorious reign, that causes no longer exist on which your subjects might appeal to you."

"Excepting always thine own; eh?" asked Charles, much pleased by the compliment which the stranger youth had paid him.

"Excepting mine own, Sir, and those of some of my distant countrymen," replied the young man; "for it is but your Majesty's usual justice which I have to crave."

"What is it, Sir: to the point," said the King. "We think you said your name was 'Procida.'"

"Alfonso, Count of Procida in Naples, gracious prince:—one of those unfortunate

Neapolitans whom circumstances alone compelled to appear for a time rebellious to your mighty sceptre."

"Ha!" cried Charles. "Thou art doubtless one of those who hoisted the French colours when René de Vaudemont invaded the kingdom last year, and assumed to himself the title of King of Naples?"

"I am one of those, my liege: one of those of your faithful subjects who, seduced by the permission which your viceroy, the Count de Lanoie proclaimed, assumed the badge of France when I found myself unable to resist the power of the invader. I am one of those whose property has since been confiscated by Don Ugo of Moncada, the Count's successor, on the plea that no viceroy had the power to dispense, even for an hour, with the allegiance which a subject owes to your majesty."

"Nor had he, by heaven!" exclaimed Charles.

"I presume not to assert that he had,"

firmly remonstrated the youth. "But your majesty is too just to permit me to be punished for having done that, in my greatest strait, which your own viceroy had permitted me before-hand to do."

"The memory of thy father's fidelity in our service, should have preserved thee, young man, from even casting a doubt on thine own allegiance."

"I had hoped, your Highness," answered the suppliant, "that the memory of that father would have shielded me from the suspicion of such a crime. Yet have I been obliged to fly from Naples to save my life, while my paternal inheritance is confiscated by the Viceroy Don Ugo."

The Emperor paused awhile irresolute; and the Cardinal of Tavera, who had been looking over some papers at a side table, came forward and remarked "aside" to his master:

"I see, by these documents, that the Count's lands, although they are of considerable

value, have not yet been apportioned to another."

"Perhaps not," answered Charles in the same under-tone: "but depend upon it that Don Ugo has raised money upon them already. They will be well mortgaged ere he gives them away!"

"Nay but—" expostulated the Cardinal.

"Nay but," interposed the King, "your reverence knows how useful this pretence of rebellion has been to our service. The lands confiscated from these people have alone replenished our Neapolitan treasury for some months. He is a convicted traitor, and he is in our power:—What say you, holy father?" suggested the wily Sovereign with some hesitation.

"It would irritate the minds of men," the churchman answered to the implied question, the import of which he well understood. "It would irritate the minds of men; more particularly since he has so distinguished him-

self in the bull-fight. The people will expect to see him nobly rewarded for his daring achievement."

"As to rewarding him, or repaying him what the viceroy may have raised upon his lands, it is simply impossible: we have not the means," said Charles. "But," he added, "if it must needs be so, an order to Don Ugo to restore his estates will be the cheapest way of getting quit of him: let him enforce it upon the viceroy, and he be able! Count," he continued, turning to the young man, "although there cannot be a doubt that, according to all the rights and usages of sovereigns, your life as well as your lands are forfeited by your having raised the standard of France during the late invasion of Naples, yet, in consideration of your father's good services and of your own prowess in the amphitheatre, which it is customary to reward, we extend our pardon to you. The Cardinal will give you a notification of this

our resolve; and also an authorisation to our viceroy of Naples to restore your lands to you. With these, you will doubtless hasten back to Naples."

Without imagining the deceptive nature of the grace announced to him, the young Count was about to prostrate himself in gratitude, when the door of the room opened, and the Duke del Infantado, attended by most of the nobility who had shrunk from the side of Charles on the preceding day, entered and respectfully paid their homage to their humbled sovereign.

It were impossible to describe the calm, courteous, and yet lordly condescension with which the Emperor received the addresses of his domineering vassals. Not one word of reproach escaped his lips: not one bitter word to show that he remembered the scorn that had been put upon him; or that aught had occurred to interrupt the harmony which had existed between the parties prior to the

late discussion. Graciously he replied to the first words of the Duke del Infantado, the while he graciously interrupted his harangue and prevented any of those allusions which the haughty grandee would have insinuated, in respect to his own triumph and his master's humiliation.

"We have been speaking of the feat which we all witnessed yesterday in the amphitheatre," he said. "Marquis of Mirandola, we hope that your fair son felt no evil effects from the attack to which he was exposed?"

"None, Sire; thanks to the interposition of this brave gentleman. Gentleman he must be, from his noble carriage, as well as from the bearings which our heralds have thought to decipher on the rich jewel he wears."

"Ha! we have heard of it," said the King. "Permit us to ask, Count, whether it be a family relic which so dazzled the eyes of our good subjects of Castile?"

"It is a jewel, your Highness, which was

taken from the great Mohammed during one of his frequent attacks upon the coast of Italy; and which was presented by our king, Alfonso, to my father in acknowledgment of his services in driving the Infidels from the town of Otranto, which they had captured and held for one year. But the engravings upon it are no christian bearing, but some unmeaning heathen scroll."

"We trust," said Charles, turning to his courtiers, "that the nobles of Spain will approve of the grace we have shown but now to the descendant of so able a defender of Christendom on its most exposed frontier—to one who yesterday exhibited such high qualities in the circus. But now, gentlemen," he continued, "we hear that two heralds from our brothers of France and England crave admittance:—we shall be glad of your counsel in whatever matters they may have to propose."

Immediately the doors were thrown open,

and two heralds, dressed in open tabards or surcoats, splendidly embroidered with the respective arms of their sovereigns, and fully accoutred in the gorgeous and showy dress of their colleges, entered the room, followed by a few attendants, and lowly knelt them at the feet of the sovereign.

"Pardon us, great Prince," said he whose bearings marked him as the envoy of England, although they no longer exhibited the arms of France, to which Henry had lately renounced his pretended right; "Pardon us, great Prince, and permit us to speak the words that have been entrusted to us."

"Speak in all assurance," replied the Emperor: "that which is friendly, shall be welcome; that which may be otherwise, God and the nobles of our kingdoms will enable us to hear unmoved."

"Charles, Emperor of Germany, Archduke of Austria, King of Spain, Hungary, and Bohemia, and Count of Flanders," spoke the

two heralds, “ know that, because, in the first place, you permit your captains to confine our holy father the Pope a close prisoner, to the great scandal and detriment of all Christendom ; because you detain the two princes of France as hostages for the fulfilment of a treaty which, according to the usages of noble sovereigns, ought not to have been imposed on a captive king ; because you refuse to reinstate in his principality the Lord Sforza, the rightful Duke of Milan, whose possessions you have unjustly conquered ; and for many other causes which our gracious lords and sovereigns have vainly striven to settle with all friendship and rightfulness—therefore we heralds of the great and puissant Henry, King of England, and Francis, King of France, Duke of Burgundy, and King of Naples, Sicily, and Jerusalem, are charged to declare unto you such war as the favour of God and the power of these united kingdoms and allies shall enable them to wage for the at-

tainment of these righteous ends. Live France! Live England!"

"Is your errand done, Sir heralds?" asked the Emperor, compressing his lips, whose ashey whiteness gave clear token of the wrathful struggle that was going on within. "Is your errand done?" he repeated, while the grandees around keenly watched the bearing of their youthful sovereign.

"It is, great prince," replied the terrified envoy: "and we pray your Majesty not to visit us with your anger: we but spoke according to the letters which have been entrusted to us."

"Fear not," said Charles: "you shall both return unharmed. You of England, because we respect your master; because we think with kindly feelings of the hours we spent together at Winchester; because, in fine, we honour an honourable foe. Tell him from us that we only regret that he should have compromised that honour by leaguings himself

with a false, lying traitor as is he of France—he who with his usual mendacity, scruples not to arrogate to himself our Italian titles. “Tremble not,” he continued to the French herald who crouched before him, “tremble not for thyself. We have said that thou shouldst go harmless. Aye harmless shalt thou go, that thou mayest bear to thy master, the expression of our utter scorn for one who, having broken his word as a Prince and his honour as a gentleman, degrades thy sacred calling by making thee the bearer of his insolent declaration of war.”

“Calm yourself, my Liege,” timidly expostulated the Cardinal of Tavera.

“The nobles of Spain will well know how to answer one who, methinks, might yet remember the castle of Madrid;” observed the Duke del Infantado.

Charles endeavoured to stifle his tumultuary passions, and slowly took one or two turns across the apartment.

"As to your master's charge about the imprisonment of his Holiness," he said addressing the English Herald, "God knows that we have long offered up prayers, in every church in Spain, for his deliverance: those prayers have been heard. He is even now free."

A murmur of applause ran through the assembled courtiers on hearing this announcement.

"As to the two French Princes, whom we detain as hostages," continued the King, and his eye again flashed with ungovernable rage, "we do detain them, and by heaven! we will continue to do so, until every tittle of the Treaty of Madrid be fulfilled. By that treaty, their father renounced all his pretensions to any Italian Sovereignty: by that treaty, he pledged himself to restore the Duchy of Burgundy immediately to our possession: by that treaty, he bound himself to return to his imprisonment should he be unable to keep

his word. Fools that we were to trust to the word, the honour, or the oaths of such an one ! Go ; begone ;” he exclaimed to the terrified envoy : “ tell your King what you have heard : tell him that we scorn him : tell him that we consider him unworthy of the consideration of a man of honour : but yet, so great is our wish to save the spilling of christian blood, that thou shalt tell him, also, that we defy him to single combat ; and that if he be not as great a dastard as he is a false liar, he will send some one to uplift the glove which we there cast before him, and will appoint a time and place of meeting.”

With ungovernable fury, he caught a mailed glove from the adjoining table, and dashed it upon the marble floor of the hall. So bold a proceeding could not fail to call forth the applause of the high-spirited and murderous nobility around. Charles enjoyed the triumph, though his own innate sense of

dignity led him instantly to feel that he had transgressed the bounds of princely decorum.

"Lead the heralds away," he said more calmly; "and give them a greater *largesse* than ever yet they received from king or emperor."

It is unnecessary to tell the reader that Francis lost not an hour in sending formally to retort the lie which had been charged upon him, and in exchanging the gage of single combat. Many were their mutual attempts to arrange a meeting, which the circumstances of the times ever prevented: and the moralist had to deplore that the example of these two mighty princes now first sanctioned the appeal to arms on questions of personal dispute; and so embittered the feelings of the two rivals that peace and good-will could never again be permanently established between them.

Meanwhile Alfonso of Procida had received his pardon; and was directed to return forth-

with to Naples with the letters to Don Ugo of Moncada, authorising that unprincipled viceroy to restore his confiscated property. The limited state of the young man's finances made him anxious not to linger on his way.

CHAPTER IV.

THE VOYAGE.

"Which is the villain? Let me see his eyes;
That when I note another man like him
I may avoid him."

SHAKESPEARE.

"Bella Italia, amate Sponde,
Pur vi torno a riveder!
Tremate in petto a sì confonde
L'alma oppressa dal piacer."

MONTE.

THE delays of courts are proverbial; and some weeks had elapsed ere so simple a document as that authorising the Viceroy of Naples to restore his confiscated estates had been delivered to the Count of Procida. The anxiety of the young man for the expediting, as it is called, of his affairs had, in the mean time, daily increased. We have mentioned

that his means of expenditure were small: for, at the invasion of the French, it had been the policy of the viceroy to dispense with the appearance in the field of the Neapolitan Barons, on the fidelity of only few of whom to the Spanish dynasty could he rely; but to require from each large contributions in money in lieu of personal service. All the immediate resources of the young Count had been thus exhausted before he was exposed to the treacherous charge from which he had been compelled to flee; and he had lately found himself ill able to meet the expenses of attendance upon the Spanish Court.

Yet amid all his straits, had his hopes and his energies been upheld by his trusted servant, Bernardo; who had ever foretold better times and had dissuaded his young master from parting from the costly relic we have noticed; and which, when driven hard by his inability to meet the expenses proper

to his station in life, he had, more than once, been tempted to do. The bitter feeling of regret at being unable to spend as others in the same rank of life spend, is a feeling not quite unknown to some young men.

At length, however, the treacherous document was placed in his hands; and he lost no time ere he sought the port of Barcellona, and there embarked on a vessel bound to his native country.

But the sailors on the Mediterranean sea were not more famous in the sixteenth century than they are at present: and many were the delays occasioned by their imperfect navigation, which still retarded the arrival of the vessel at the wished-for port. Thus, for example, some fears of an anticipated storm, which were as futile as such fears had often been proved to be, drove the timid mariners to take shelter, on a beautiful afternoon of Spring, in the little sea-port of Ostia, at the mouth of the Tiber. The

evening was beautiful, although sultry: the chances of the threatened storm were doubtful: and Alfonso of Procida, with the other passengers, were soon wandering through the dense forests that cover that marshy shore. The vegetation was rank around them; the country was wild and uninhabited: not a breath of air moved the leaves of the trees: the birds carolled drowsily as if only half-awakened from their noon-day rest: a few wild boars at times crossed their path and made them regret that they were not mounted on fleet coursers and armed with strong spears, so as to have been able to follow, in noble and dangerous sport, the wild denizens of the forest.

But other denizens, as dangerous and as wild, lurked not far distant. As they neared an inlet of the sea, sheltered behind lofty and wooded sandbanks, they came upon a party seated on the grass, around many a flask of wine, and who seemed as much surprised to

see the Spaniards as the latter were to behold them. The surprise, however, was of short continuance. Jumping upon their feet, the strangers quickly surrounded our travellers; and brandishing their scimitars and shouting "Allah, Allah, Hu! Barbarossa! Barbarossa!" warned the intruders of the propriety of instant submission.

Even had their numbers been equal, which they were far from being, it is doubtful whether the Spaniards would have ventured to offer any resistance to those who invoked that dreaded name of which the sound alone now blanched their cheeks. Vainly did the Count Alfonso draw his trusted sword from its scabbard. He was surrounded and disarmed in an instant: his own servant, Bernardo, joining with the turbanned corsairs in pinioning his arms with an appearance of most officious zeal against him.

The party into whose hands our travellers had fallen appeared to look upon the present

occurrence as one too common to excite a passing thought. They tightly bound their prisoners hand and foot; and having cast them upon the ground, returned to their own places and proceeded to quaff the contents of their flasks with encreased relish and glee.

From the company of the victors and of the vanquished, one individual had withdrawn unobserved by the rest. While aiding to disarm his master, Bernardo had found time to whisper a word in the ear of the leader, as he seemed to be, of the corsairs; and he now stood retired behind a clump of low spreading trees with his turbanned acquaintance.

"Thou here, Bernardo!" exclaimed the latter as they met. "I thought thee in Naples."

"So I was, captain," replied the servant: "but the huntsman must follow the track of the game. What do you here?"

"Thou mayest well ask," answered the corsair. "These countries have been so ruined by others than us, that little can now be found in them worth the taking. However we had received notice that she, thou knowest of, was staying at Civita Lavinia, a little up the country."

"What, at the place where you first seized me and then took me into partnership; at the place where you tried to seize Pope Leo?"* asked Bernardo laughing. "That would indeed have been a capture!"

"Aye, indeed, by Allah! either his Holiness should have turned Mussulman, or we would have drained all Europe for his ransom! But now to the matter in hand. The lady is not in this country. I must set sail. What am I to do with thee and the Signor Padrone, whoever he may be, whom thou didst so affectionately knock down?"

"You must let us both go, Sinan," ex-

* See Roscoe's Life of Leo x.

claimed Bernardo. "Aye, and the vessel and the sailors: they are not worth seizing."

"As to that," replied the captain, "Since these pious confraternities have united to redeem christians from our hands, every one is worth the taking; for they will give a price for his soul if not for his body. Ha! ha! ha!" he continued, laughing in an undertone as one who was used to guard against eves-droppers. "These pious subscribers have established the most profitable traffic in the world for us. If they would not redeem them, we should not take the trouble of seizing them. We never redeem our people; and thou seest that our shores are free from Frankish corsairs."

"True enough, Sinan," replied Bernardo. "Take then the other passengers, as you will: my Count and I must on to Naples in our own vessel."

"Allah ackbar!" cried the Corsair.

"Aye, by your adopted cry of 'Allah' or

whatever you like, we must," insisted Bernardo. "My Count is not worth taking now : there are those who would rather see him out of the way than ransom him. But when he has recovered his property and when he has decoyed his beautiful cousin whom you are so bent upon possessing—"

"His cousin, sayest thou?"

"Aye, his cousin. See, now, how valuable he may be while free ; how useless he would be in Tunis."

"I believe thou art right," answered the Barbary captain thoughtfully.

"Trust the matter to me. He is in good hands," answered Bernardo.

But few more sentences were exchanged between these worthy confederates ; and then the captain, returning to his men, exclaimed, "Our boat is full to sinking of those we have already captured ; and these fellows are not worth the voyage. Rifle their pockets, comrades, and let us be off. Allah sends us a

favouring breeze, as I see by the leaves on the tops of the beeches."

The pockets of the captives were rifled by the pirates with their usual alacrity ; and one or two of the poorer Christians, who muttered their prayers too audibly, were knocked on the head with their usual piety : soon were they all left bound where they lay.

The shades of evening had now closed over the landscape, when loud groans from Bernardo drew the attention of his master and of the other captives. Alfonso turned him with difficulty and perceived his servant lying, apparently bound like the rest, at the foot of a neighbouring tree. He was about to reproach him with his treachery in having aided the pirates to disarm him when the wily Italian broke in upon his speech :—

"Santa madre di Dio !" exclaimed Bernardo, "Benedetto Santo Gennaro ! I think that by the grace of God I shall be able to free my hand. Dio Santo, help me, help me !

There, bravo, bravo, at last," he continued, "I have freed my hands, Signor Alfonso, and shall be able to cut the thong which binds my legs and then release you all in an instant. Blessed be Saint Januarius!" he cried, jumping on his feet, and moving stiffly towards his prostrate master.

"Villain!" exclaimed Alfonso; "why didst thou aid those Infidel dogs to unarm me? I would else have sent some of them to join their prophet before their time."

"Pardon me, Signor Conte," said the man; "You would have been sent to heaven yourself ere you had laid in your full share of merit. You could have done nothing against the number; and your Eccellenza would have been cut down in another second."

Admitting the apparent truth of his servant's observation, the Count could only rise from the ground, shake himself, and thank Bernardo for his fidelity and attachment. Soon after, all the party repaired on board their

vessel ; that of the pirates was already out of sight ; and our hero, having set sail on the following morning with a prosperous wind, reached, in due time, that most loved and lovely lake—the Bay of Naples.

CHAPTER V.

THE MIRACLE.

Postera tempestas melior : via pejor, adusque
Bari mœnia piscosi ; dehinc Gnatia lymphis
Iratis exstructa dedit risusque jocosque,
Dum flamma sine, thura liquescere limine sacro
Persuadere cupit : credat Judæus Appella,
Non ego : namque Deos didici securum agere ævum :
Nec si quid miri faciat natura, Deos id
Tristes ex alto cœli demittere tecto.
Brundisium longæ finis chartæque viæque est.

HORACE.

MEANWHILE the public affairs of nations, to which we have alluded in our third chapter, had been conducted with an energy equal to the occasion. Pope Clement the Seventh had been released from that imprisonment in his own capital to which the attack of the treacherous, but unfortunate, Duke de Bourbon had

reduced him : and the triumphant approach of the celebrated Maréchal de Lautrec at the head of the forces organised by the allies—Henry of England, Francis of France, the Venetian, and other Italian states—had alarmed the shattered remains of the army which still rioted within the walls of the Eternal City. Desponding and terrified at the approach of the avenger, the few thousands of that invincible army of Spaniards, Germans, and freebooters of every land, whom disease, induced by their own profligacy, still spared, had rallied round the standard of the Prince of Orange who had succeeded their fallen leader, de Bourbon.

But the terror of his approach having alone sufficed to procure the liberation of the Pontiff, the states of Rome had not called for the presence of de Lautrec. Towards Naples he had directed his victorious march : eager to make good his master's doubtful claim to that beautiful kingdom, and to wrest it from the

hated rule of the Spanish conqueror. Cities had freely opened their gates to his summons : every where he had been received as a liberator : the only Spanish force in Italy was composed of the bands concentrated under the command of the Prince of Orange ; and these had been quite inadequate to oppose the French general in the field. They had hastened on to Naples ; and shutting themselves up in that capital, had awaited the approach of the invaders.

De Lautrec had not tarried long behind. But from the heights of the Vomero, that experienced leader had soon discovered the hopelessness of attempting to take by mere force a city which was defended by an army, shut up within its walls. Famine would more surely do his work ; and while he studded with his batteries those beautiful heights—one of which still retains the name of Lotrecco—Andrew Doria, with the powerful fleet of the allies, rode securely in that radiant bay and

cut off all succour and all provisions from the already wretched inhabitants of the city.

Wretched, indeed, was the state of the Neapolitans within the city ; and complicated were their difficulties ! Hating the Spaniards, they were shut up within the same walls from which those Spaniards defended themselves, and were thus exposed to the iron rule and the ruthless violence of hordes that had been brutalized by long months of irresponsible misrule in Rome : looking upon the besieging French as their liberators, they were compelled to suffer the horrors of a siege at their hands ; and to disguise their own feelings, and await the time when their city might be taken by storm and sacked and plundered by these friendly besiegers.

Frequent tumult evinced their feelings.

It was a beautiful May-morning : and the sun of Naples shone as cheerily as that glorious sun usually shines. But the town of Naples was then far different from what it

now shows itself to astonished foreigners: few of the wider streets, few of the quays and open squares which now render it airy and salubrious, then existed. The far famed Strada di Toledo did not then offer its scenes of endless and varied amusement: not until a score of years later than our epoch, did it make its way athwart the narrow alleys of the populous city under the creative and fostering guidance of the Viceroy, Don Pietro of Toledo, and from whom it took its name. Dark, close lanes, the houses bordering upon which toppled high aloft so as almost to exclude daylight even in that region of light, then intersected one another, at every imaginable angle, where some degree of regularity appears now to reign. Over these darkened alleys hung those unwholesome fogs which then ever arose from the undrained low ground on the eastern side of the city and which, at the time we write of, were increased by the recent attempt of the besiegers to cut

off an aqueduct which supplied a great portion of the town: the waters, diverted from their usual course, overflowed the lower grounds and engendered wide-spreading pestilence for the destruction of a devoted people.

But the greater the calamities which pressed upon the population of the city, the greater their anxiety to anticipate the knowledge of their fate. Never had the cathedral church of Naples been so crowded as it was at this time! Not in the glittering temple, or rather the assemblage of six temples which now constitute the archiepiscopal church,—not in this more modern building but in the low-vaulted chapel beneath it were these anxious thousands collected. It was the festival on which the liquefaction of the blood of St. Januarius, the patron Saint of Naples, was to gratify all hearts by foretelling peace and prosperity; or it was the day on which the non-performance of the miracle was to strike terror and dismay into all by prognosticating

every possible calamity. The organ pealed; women sobbed; children screamed; men clustered together around the sturdy pillars of the church—their bare shaggy breasts glistening in the glare of a thousand smoking lamps—or cast their red night-caps on the ground and knelt, and reverently kissed the pavement while they prayed to God and their patron to vouchsafe to them a favourable omen.

A popular preacher mounted the tribune. His manner was familiar and yet earnest; his expression was grave and yet comic. Silence immediately ensued; and the crowd of expectant, anxious, sunburnt faces was bent intently upon him.

“Bravo!” exclaimed the orator in the broadest Neapolitan dialect and casting his arms wildly in the air. “Bravo, my children. I bless God for having led so many of you here to seek the protection of our glorious patron. *Ecce nunc tempus acceptabile, ecce*

nunc dies salutis—Do you want to know what that means? It means that those who are under the guardianship of good Saint Januarius should merit his protection by their piety; should throng around his relics on these solemn occasions as you, my children, do now; for this is the time when your prayers will be acceptable; this is the day of salvation. That is what the Latin text means, my children. Trust in it, and trust in our great saint. Though the enemies encompass us on every side, Saint Januarius is with us. *Quare fremuerunt gentes?* Of what use will all their cannon be to them? See that pillar, my children: let us suppose it to be this famous Mareschallo Lotrecco, and let it answer me: Answer me, Lotrecco, I say. Can your cannon rival the power of our great Saint Januarius? Can you stop the eruptions of Mount Vesuvius, as Saint Januarius has often arrested them? then why should we fear you when we have a greater than you on

whom to rely? Answer me, I say, you who come upon us with all the armies of France. He is silent, my brethren," continued the orator after a short pause; "he is silent: he has not a word to oppose to our trust in the intercession of Saint Januarius. Let not your hearts be troubled therefore and let them not be afraid; but trust in him who is seated at the right hand of God to proffer your petitions. But wait a moment," added, thoughtfully, the preacher: "Saint Januarius cannot be seated there, for there is God the Son: but fear not, my children: we will soon find a place for him whence he will be able to hear you and to pray for you. We cannot, you see, put him at the right hand for the reason I have given; shall we put him at the left hand of the Eternal Father? No: for there is, doubtless, the Blessed Virgin"—

"Padre," exclaimed a voice from the throng, "look you, Padre; you may put him here, for I am tired and am going away."

"Shame!"

"Silence!"

"Eretico!"

"Luterano!" exclaimed several voices in a suppressed murmur, while a broad grin also shone on many a face as it passed round to look in the direction of the voice. The preacher, however, went on, nothing daunted or disturbed.

"Heretic? Lutheran? say you my children?" he exclaimed. "No: not so; we will not believe that these new pestiferous doctrines have found their way into Naples."

We need not pursue the oration further : it was continued some while in the same strain, and produced a visible effect upon its hearers, most of whom were lazzeroni and fishermen of the lowest order in Naples. The preacher had, evidently, found a way to their hearts ; and took the opportunity of instilling some good advice, some cheering hopefulness.

At the conclusion of his discourse, a door opened from the sanctuary, and the Archbishop of Naples entered the church—bearing two small phials enclosed in silver filagree work and preceded by a dignified ecclesiastic who carried a rich silver case in which it was understood that the head of the saint was contained. A lengthened procession with crosses, banners, and lights followed, and wound its way up to the steps of the high altar. The relics were deposited on the holy table ; and the archbishop, who was an elderly man of mild and dignified bearing, and who was not, by birth, a Neapolitan,

turning to the congregation, addressed a few words to them.

“My brethren,” he said, “I am a stranger amongst you and am edified by the devotion which you this day exhibit towards the glorious bishop and martyr who is the patron saint of your city. But as there are doubtless amongst you many of the Emperor’s German subjects, some of whom may have imbibed the new doctrines which are now preached in that country, I would explain to them with what thoughts they and we ought to witness the phenomenon which has rendered Naples so illustrious. Miracles recorded in the Holy Scriptures are revealed facts and are an object of faith. Other miracles are not considered in the same light, nor does our faith rest upon them, although they illustrate and confirm it: nor do they demand or admit any higher assent than that which prudence requires—than that which is due to the evidence or to the human authority on which

they rest. You will, therefore, form your own opinion on the miracle of Saint Januarius. I question not your right to dissent from it: do not you question our right to believe in that of which we have records since the fourth century when this blessed martyr died for his friend and for his faith."

The prelate turned him round and knelt on the steps of the altar; and the service which generally ushers in the miracle was again continued. Again the organ pealed forth its tones; again the chant arose; and again the Neapolitans bent towards the altar with feverish and trembling anxiety. Irony and scorn sat on the features of several German officers, high in rank in the Prince of Orange's army, who had entered the church after the archbishop and who now stood within the rails of the sanctuary. Their looks were not unmarked by the Neapolitans; and many a curse upon the foreign garrison blended

with the prayers that uprose that day from patriotic hearts.

The service had continued for some time. The vase containing the head of the saint stood at one end of the altar, at the other end, was the case that held the phials of the martyr's blood. Impatience began to manifest itself in the croud.

"Does it melt?" whispered one to another.

"I think not," was replied in an equally subdued tone.

"Pazienza!" groaned forth a Neapolitan, while he joined in the chorus of the litany.

"Patience, indeed!" exclaimed a comrade more loudly. "San Gennaro will not protect us this time."

"San Gennaro was a true Neapolitan," interposed a lazzarone more loudly.

"Aye, aye, the Padre told us so;" answered several voices.

"Therefore, amico," exclaimed a powerful man whose bare feet and legs were fringed at

the knees by white cotton drawers that enclosed a brown shirt, the unbuttoned throat of which exposed a chest of brick colour covered with tuffets of raven black hair—"Therefore, amico," exclaimed this picture of a fisherman, casting his scarlet cloth cap upon his dark curling locks—"therefore San Gennaro will not perform the miracle in favour of the proud Spaniards."

"Nor of the heretic Germans," added a fellow whose appearance was equally striking and picturesque.

"Evviva the Emperor!" muttered a small shopkeeper of the opposite faction:

"Maledetto Santo—cursed Saint!" exclaimed a fellow devotee, "perform thy miracle instantly."

"We will choose another patron else!" growled a neighbour in a broken dialect which betokened his Spanish origin.

"Davvero!" responded a patriotic Neapolitan; "there is many a saint who would

be proud to be patron of such a city as Naples."

"If it were free from Spaniards and Germans!" expostulated the fisherman who had before spoken.

"It does not melt, amico!" cried another of the crowd aloud from behind one of the massive pillars of the church. "San Genaro abjures Naples while it harbours the Spaniards and excludes our brave liberators."

While these remarks had multiplied and had gradually assumed a tone which boded a popular insurrection against the Spanish party, a German officer, seated within the rails of the altar, had risen and approached the officiating archbishop. He was a man of large frame, upwards of six feet high: his chest was broad and thrown forwards: his white flaxen hair streamed upon his gilded leathern jerkin: his straight white moustache dropped heavily over the depressed corners of a large full mouth: his pale blue eyes twinkled with anger.

"Monsignore!" he exclaimed to the archbishop, "perform your jugglery! do your miracle, or else—"

He half unsheathed the dagger in his belt and pointed to it with a threatening gesture.

"Pray, thyself, rash man," exclaimed the archbishop rising on his feet. "There is the head of the Saint; there is his precious blood; pray, thyself, that it may liquify, and that God may vouchsafe to Naples the assurance of his protection."

The prelate spoke earnestly; and it was evident to those without the rails, that some altercation was going on, although they could not distinguish the words that were spoken. Some of the more fiery Neapolitans sprung, however, from their knees.

"Shame! shame!" cried several voices.

"That is the robber Schertel!" exclaimed one.

"Down with the plundering captain!" vociferated several in the back ground; for the

reputation of this German *condottiere* had been widely spread.

The pale freckled cheeks of the captain grew crimson with rage:—

“Insolent impostor!” he cried, striding towards the venerable archbishop and now wholly drawing the dagger from his girdle; “thy life shall atone for this delay!”

That life however was redeemed. A slight but noble figure rushed from the body of officers who stood near and firmly grasped the arm of the German as it was thrown back for the blow.

“Shame! Captain Schertel!” exclaimed the youthful champion of the prelate. “Shame to strike an old man! Besides, will the Emperor’s service be advanced by the act?”

“Tousand Teufeln! who art thou?” growled forth the angry captain.

“Heed not who I am,” answered the young man: “but now that you have had time for reflection, take back your arm and turn it anvil on Alfonso of Procida.”

"Doubt not that I will do so," replied Schertel sulkily sheathing his weapon, and retiring to his comrades. But while our old acquaintance, the Count of Procida, had thus interfered and had mastered the bulky German more by sleight of hand than by bodily strength, the thousands within the church had risen as one man; and fearful consequences threatened to follow this rude violation of their national solemnity. But padre Ottone, the favourite preacher, immediately stepped forward, and again began one of those rambling, familiar discourses with which he was wont to sway and charm the minds of his impetuous countrymen. By such means, he kept their attention engrossed for half an hour, during which time the cause of the late offence was nearly forgotten. The litanies and prayers were then resumed; but still without producing any more apparent effect than had before attended them. When fresh murmurs of disapprobation began to arise from the now pacified crowd, the arch-

bishop turned him calmly round and said, "My dear brethren and children, the Almighty does not, at this time, deign to attend to our prayers: he does not, at this time, vouchsafe to us the blessed miracle which has so often consoled and encouraged you. Let each one instantly seek his home in peace and quietness, praying that his own sins may not have conduced to the withdrawal of the protecting intercession of Saint Januarius."

The procession of the priests was instantly re-formed; and the holy relics were carried out of the chapel with the same ceremonial as that which had introduced them.

Many a sob and many a groan, many an imprecation and many a direful prognostication of impending evils, were uttered by the disappointed and desponding Neapolitans as each wound his way to his own home or sought the porter's basket and the over-shadowing portico in which he was wont to doze away the hours of noon.

CHAPTER VI.

THE DISAPPOINTMENT.

Fra tutti i cibi, o che rovò l'usanza
O diè necessità, non è il migliore
Di quello ch'è da voi detto Speranza.
Cibo d'incomparabile sapore,
Cibo che non si mangia allessò o arrosto.
Cibo puro, invisibile e del cuore.
Nè come gli altri si dilegua tosto,
Ne si compra per oro o per castella,
Ma puossi sempre haverne senza costo
Ne più bel Pater noster, al parer mio
Si può insegnar a un putto ch'abbia ingegno
Che soffri, spera e largia far à Dio

LUDOVICO DOLCE.

It is the day after that on which the miraculous liquifaction of the blood of St. Januarius, on being approximated to the head of the martyr, did not take place: and we

must introduce our readers into a large hall in the old Castle of Naples—at that time the residence of the Viceroy. A marble floor; hangings of faded damask; a few high-backed seats; and, on one side, a throne raised one step from the floor and overshadowed by a canopy of crimson silk;—a large table in the centre on which were some papers, maps, a sword or two, and a steel head-piece inlaid with arabesques of gold: such were the fittings-up of the vice-regal apartment. A little dark man, with large moustaches neatly trimmed and with features which showed a blended expression of cunning and austerity, was seated at the head of the table; he wore a splendid Spanish hat, and a rich cloak was cast over his slight, but gorgeous, armour. This was Don Hugo of Moncada, Viceroy of Naples.

The Prince of Orange was seated beside him: his was a small, but bloated, jovial countenance, on which a depth of rigid deter-

mination contended with a superficial expression of careless frankness, and of dissolute self-indulgence. His hair was long and sandy. He was completely cased in armour which showed many a trace of other than holiday work.

Two other personages stood beside. The one whose helmet lay on the table, thus exposing to view a noble head and expansive brow charged with forethought and calm dignity, was the Marquis del Vasto. The other, a weather-beaten old man dressed in a slight but handsomely-embroidered linen tunic which, falling loosely over a coat of linked mail, in some degree concealed the prominent irregularity of his spine, was the veteran Venetian admiral—the Gobbo, or hunchback Giustiniano. He sauntered about the room as one relying upon his own merits and independent of the court intrigues which influenced the councils of his companions.

"Well, but noble gentlemen," he exclaimed

with a blunt and sarcastic manner, "although I know not whether I ought first to address myself to his Grace the Viceroy of Naples or to his Excellency the Prince of Orange, the Emperor's Lieutenant General in Italy—yet, methinks, that you can, without any surrender of the great pretensions and great claims of each, follow the suggestion of the Marquis del Vasto."

"As Viceroy in this kingdom, it is my purpose to do so," said Don Hugo.

"I rejoice to hear your Grace say so," replied the Prince of Orange; "because I should otherwise, as successor to the Duke of Bourbon, the Emperor's Lieutenant, have felt it my duty to give the necessary orders in this besieged city."

"I would also advise," the old sailor continued to suggest, "that you should prohibit the religious processions which the people are making through every quarter of the city: they are so terrified by the non-performance

of yesterday's miracle, that the prayers and lamentations in which they indulge to secure supernatural aid are enough to frighten even your German desperadoes, Prince."

"I fear my German desperadoes, Don Giustiniano," answered the Prince of Orange, "are as little open to religious terrors as your Italian sailors."

"Nay, nay; no sparring between friends," interposed the hunchback gaily. "I, you know, am neither Viceroy nor Captain General, but a poor mariner ashore."

"Let me, also, strongly recommend," Del Vasto suggested, "that you should desist from this project of enrolling and arming the Neapolitans for the defence of their city. You will but make their numbers known to themselves."

"Aye, and encourage them to revolt against the mild sway of Don Hugo," added the Prince of Orange in a somewhat scoffing tone.

"Or, rather, against the army, which your

grace has so well disciplined and kept in such excellent order and subjection while in Rome," responded the Viceroy.

Del Vasto again interposed. "Let me beseech you, gentlemen, to forbear," he said. "The army is dividing itself into factions, according to what it believes to be the opposing sentiments of its leaders. Our common foe, de Lautrec, may well demand our united energies."

"And, by the Madonna del porto," exclaimed Giustiniano, "here comes one opportunely to turn our thoughts to other matters; aye, del Vasto? what think you of your new fief of Procida?"

The entrance of the Count of Procida prevented the Marquis from replying. The young man advanced boldly towards the table.

"How now, sir?" exclaimed the Viceroy in a tone of surprise. "Do you consider your new allies, the French, already masters of

Naples, that you venture to return thus openly? We had heard that you had prudently fled from the vengeance of the Emperor."

"I did fly from the vengeance of the Emperor's Viceroy to the justice of the Emperor himself," the Count replied. "There," he added, reverently placing a carefully tied and sealed paper before Don Hugo, "there is the result of my flight and the cause of my return."

With some show of respect, mingled with a visible under-current of annoyance and surprise, the Viceroy cut, with his dagger, the silken band which surrounded the packet, and hastily glanced at its contents.

"These regard you more than any one else," he said, pushing the papers towards the Marquis of Vasto.

"Not more than the bearer of them, I suspect;" the hunchback interposed. "What say you, youngster?" he demanded of the

Count. "Are you come to take your own again, when its new owner was just comfortably settling himself in his berth? I hope thou hast obtained thy pardon; for I remember thy father well at Otranto."

"His Majesty has deigned to free me from all those unfounded imputations of disloyalty to which I had been exposed," Alfonso replied.

"Per Bacco! but I am glad of it;" said the old man. "But has he restored thine inheritance? has he restored the island of Procida to thee? Methinks that I would rather possess that island than twice the extent of land ashore. Has he restored it to thee?" asked his new friend with some degree of interest.

"Restored!" exclaimed the Count. "Who has presumed"—

Meanwhile the Viceroy and del Vasto had been laying their heads together and conversing in anxious whispers as they bent over the despatches. At length, they appeared to

have taken their resolves; and, while the Prince of Orange left the room as one indifferent to the whole matter, Don Hugo exclaimed to our hero,

"I congratulate you, young Sir, upon the favour which the Emperor has shown you in pardoning the imputation of rebellion under which you lay. His Majesty also directs that your lordships and estates should be restored to you. But our gracious Sovereign was not aware, at the time when these letters were made out, that, considering your lands to be forfeited to the crown, we had felt it our duty to bestow them upon a zealous and faithful supporter of the Empire."

"Bestow away my lands? and without the Emperor's sanction?" exclaimed the Count of Procida.

"Do not interrupt me, young gentleman," continued the Viceroy. "I have considered it my duty to reward the services of a faithful subject with the property of one who was

Count. "Are you come to take your own again, when its new owner was just comfortably settling himself in his berth? I hope thou hast obtained thy pardon; for I remember thy father well at Otranto."

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"Do not interrupt me, young gentleman," continued the Viceroy. "I have considered it my duty to reward the services of a faithful subject with the property of one who was

nounced against him. All his triumphant anticipations of immediate reinstalment in his possessions were at once dissipated. And in the face of such interests as were now avowedly opposed to his, what prospect had he that justice would ever prevail? Was it even certain that the Emperor himself had not planned his present disappointment?—had not, in order to relieve himself from his presence in Spain, granted letters of which he well-knew the worthlessness? Such treachery was not, even then, deemed foreign to the character of Charles. Desponding and sick at heart, and with his eyes thoughtfully bent on the floor, the young man withdrew in silence from the Vice-regal palace.

Nor were the scenes of distress, which began already to manifest themselves in the narrow streets of this populous city, calculated to render his thoughts less gloomy.

His own immediate wants, his own prospects engrossed, however, all his faculties;

and the sight of sickness and starvation around him, but made him feel that starvation and sickness would, in all probability, soon be his own lot. The few thousand ducats with which he had first managed to escape from his country, had gradually melted away before the long-drawn dilatoriness and the sordid expectations of the Spanish functionaries. And now it was shown that all his exertions had been made in vain ; that a fresh suit was to be entered upon, more hopeless than the last ; while so far from having means with which to fee tardy officials, he had scarcely wherewith to support himself for a few days.

He possessed, indeed, friends such as usually cling to the prosperous head of a noble family ; relatives also, such as remember their connection while it reflects credit upon themselves. But which of those friends would now assist him ? which of these relatives would now step forward in his behalf ? The difficulties of the times, indeed, were almost

nounced against him. All his triumphant anticipations of immediate reinstalment in his possessions were at once dissipated. And in the face of such interests as were now avowedly opposed to his, what prospect had he that justice would ever prevail? Was it even certain that the Emperor himself had not planned his present disappointment?—had not, in order to relieve himself from his presence in Spain, granted letters of which he well-knew the worthlessness? Such treachery was not, even then, deemed foreign to the character of Charles. Desponding and sick at heart, and with his eyes thoughtfully bent on the floor, the young man withdrew in silence from the Vice-regal palace.

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The following day was far advanced ere Bernardo entered his room : for that discreet servant had been out late at night on some business of his own, and had been unwilling to disturb his master by intruding upon him on his return. He was shocked to see the difference which a few hours had made in the appearance of the Count. Listless and languid, he lay upon his pallet with the same dress about him which he had worn when he had gone out on the preceding morning. The emaciation of his sunken cheek—for he had not since touched food,—the fixed glare of his eye, and the incoherence of his words, at once declared that he was smitten by one of the many illnesses which already afflicted thousands of the inhabitants of the city. That illness had already tainted the current of his blood, else would he not have yielded to the weak despondency that had overpowered him on the preceding day.

Bernardo did all that a faithful attendant

could do. He inspected his master's purse that he might judge what resources he had at hand: he carefully placed away the valuable jewel which he had ever appeared to prize with an affection proportioned to its splendour: and he then procured such food as the scanty supplies of the Neapolitan market permitted to his slender means. He knew not of the bitter disappointment which his master had received on the preceding day: but deemed him the lord of wide domains so soon as he should be well enough to present the Emperor's letters to the Viceroy. For a fortnight, he served him with assiduity and fidelity: but at the end of a fortnight, he was still an invalid—and his mind still appeared as much impaired as was his bodily strength.

Bernardo deemed his recovery hopeless, and prudently resolved to make those arrangements which the urgency of the case appeared to require.

CHAPTER VII.

THE BARGAIN.

Parthenope mihi culta, vale, blandissima Siren ;
Atque horti valeant, Hesperidesque tuæ ;
Mergellina, vale, nostri memor ; et mea flentis
Serta cape, heu domini munera avari tui.

bristled all over with cannon of the Prince of Orange as it is now surmounted by the Castel Sant' Elmo), and descended to the shore of Chiaja.

How beautiful was that morning of the early summer! How enlivening the light-some breezes from the North! How lovely the scenery around! A small country house—a fairy palace of taste and elegance, uprose beside that delicious shore; and, from the wooded slopes of Mounte Posilipo, overlooked the whole bay, the picturesque city, the fading hills of Sorrento, and Vesuvius. The little villa stood, upon a platform of hewn stone, as if on tiptoe to catch every feature of the smiling landscape. It was surrounded by a graceful portico covered with creeping plants of the gayest hues. Aloes and prickly fig trees clomb from the fissures in the surrounding rocks. The supposed tomb of Virgil, dear to every enthusiast, was seen through the foliage at no great distance. Winding

paths conducted through the natural plantations of myrtle and other flowering shrubs, and wound their way to the revered ruin: conducting to every gentle eminence, to every advanced acclivity whence a varied and still beautiful peep at the radiant bay might be obtained.

A man of seventy, of mild and venerable aspect, descended, with tottering steps, along one of these paths and approached the front of the elegant little mansion. He supported his steps by means of a stout staff: a large volume was rolled under his left arm. Speeding forwards with an anxious and nervously-irritable manner, he encountered, on the platform before the house, such a group as had seldom visited that placid retreat. The German *condottiere*, Captain Schertel, stood on that trim platform at the head of a band of peasants and of pioneers.

"What answer from the Prince of Orange?" anxiously demanded the aged recluse.

"It must be, Signor Sannazzaro," replied the Captain.

"It must be!" exclaimed the poet in a tone of horror.

"It must," the unmoved Captain replied. "I have humoured you by delaying this matter as long as possible on account of the little present you sent for my poor famished men; but the house must now be levelled. The Prince insists upon the immediate erection of the fortifications."

"Must be levelled! Mergellina, my fairy creation of Mergellina must be levelled!" cried the old man, sinking upon a marble seat beneath his portico. "Must be levelled!" he continued. "The place which was given me by a beloved sovereign; the place which I have embellished; the place which I have immortalized, and which has tended to immortalize me, must be levelled to make way for anti-national fortifications. Beloved abode," he continued, "what do I not owe to

thy blissful shades ! How many a beaming thought with which I have embellished my Arcadia, have I not caught from the placid scenery around thee ! How many an anxious hour of those twenty years which I have spent on my great poem, '*De partu Virginis*,' has not been soothed by the charms which I ever found in thee ! But now, it must be levelled," he continued, rising angrily from his seat : " the abode of poesy and of learning which I had beautified during a long life, must be levelled, forsooth, by the mighty Prince of Orange. Be it as the gods will ; only stay those impatient pickaxes until an old man has tottered forth to die in some corner of the wide world beyond the reach of the Prince of Orange. May I but live long enough to see him, also, levelled, as he is about to level my beloved Mergellina ! "

A servant came forth from the mansion, on whose arm the poet leaned as he hastily tottered down the steep acclivity of Posilipo ;

continuing to mutter his poetic regrets and his treasonable imprecations against the Emperor's lieutenant.

The German captain heeded him not ; knew not, probably, that he had to do with a man of immortal fame ; knew not, probably, that sixty editions of his boasted 'Arcadia' had already been published, and that he was long destined to rank amongst one of the first poets whom Italy has ever produced. Captain Schertel heeded him not ; but proceeded to give directions to the busy pioneers around him.

An hour afterwards, Bernardo stealthily entered the gardens, and found him still thus employed. With a confident and jaunty air, he came up to him as he stood somewhat apart, having given his final directions to the superintending engineer.

"Salute, Signore," said Bernardo.

"What now, fellow ?" scornfully asked the Captain.

"Good day to your Eccellenza," replied Bernardo.

"Who art thou, fellow?" again asked the German.

"One who is willing to befriend your Signoria," the other answered, nothing abashed.

"Befriend me? insolent!" exclaimed the *condottiere*.

"Per servirla," imperturbably answered Bernardo. "We are fellow labourers in the same vocation. Men of genius, both."

"Take my advice, fellow, and make off in time to save thine ears," observed the Captain turning away.

"Then your Eccellenza would not wish to possess it?" observed Bernardo in an apologetic tone. "I did not think it had been above your mark."

"Possess what, friend?" asked Schertel, returning with some degree of interest.

"Nay—nay, if your Lordship cannot afford to purchase it, there be other noble leaders.

"I give you good day;" said the servant, turning as if to quit the grounds.

"To possess what, friend?" now anxiously enquired the condottiere. "There be few Imperial leaders more generous than Sebastian Schertel."

"And, therefore, I sought him out; sure that our pursuits would tally; and, as I said before, that I could be of service to him."

"What is thy name, friend, and what is the matter in hand?" asked the leader. "Thou seemest to be a lad of merit."

"No doubt; no doubt;" replied the other, "a lad of merit while I follow in your noble wake. My name is Bernardo Accorto—which, in our expressive language, means 'Bernardo Wide-awake.' I strive not to belie my name, Eccellenza."

"Therefore?" suggested the German.

"Therefore, my Lord," responded the servant, "will you accept of my mediation? mediation—'tis a good word, and between

clever men, intelligible. Shall I be your Excellency's mediator ? ”

“ On what conditions ? ” asked the German, careful not to compromise himself unawares.

“ On what condition ? ” responded Bernardo musing. “ Oh, doubtless, on the condition that each should do the best he can for himself. We cannot take one another in, Captain : therefore we may as well speak out at once.”

“ A shrewd lad, in truth ! ” exclaimed Schertel. “ What is thy present proposal ? ”

“ The bargain being struck, Captain,” replied the other, “ I have now to begin my condition. Would your Eccellenza wish to possess a costly jewel at somewhat less than its real value ? ”

“ The said jewel having been stolen by thee ; aye ? ”

“ Softly, softly, Captain : no harsh words, an it please you ; ” answered Bernardo with a pretended look of horror. “ Deem you all

your booty to have been stolen? My jewel is as honestly come by: and I may help your valour to others. Marked you the trinket in the bonnet of the noble youth who checked your kind intentions towards the archbishop?"

"I did. What is thy price?"

"One thousand ducats."

"I will give thee five hundred."

"Paid down?" asked Bernardo.

"Paid down, where thou wilt."

"In the chapel of San Gennaro at three o'clock this afternoon. My master's wants are pressing," replied the faithful attendant.

"I understand," answered the Captain with a hoarse laugh. "Who is thy master?"

"Enough, Signor, I must be discreet," answered Bernardo Accorto. "I am the mediator between ye. At three o'clock be it; in the church San Gennaro," he continued; and, turning suddenly away, he soon disappeared amongst the vines and myrtles of Posilipo.

It was late in the afternoon when Bernardo Accorto returned to his master's lodgings; and having expected to find that master in the last agonies of life, his surprise may be imagined when he saw him dressed in his threadbare suit and seated at the window of the little room. Cheerless was the prospect, and unwholesome was the air which he there enjoyed: but any varied prospect and any air is refreshing to those who rise from a bed of sickness. That his recovery may not surprise the reader as much as it did his trusty servant, we will mention that the encreased misery and the encreased mortality in the city, in which the plague, induced by famine and foul air, now raged with fearful violence, had caused each quarter of the capital to be placed under the supreme controul of sanitary inspectors, who had appointed charitable confraternities and priests to visit and alleviate, so far as was possible, the distress in every street: that the popular preacher who has

before edified us, Padre Ottone, accompanied by a medical practitioner, had entered the lodgings of the Count soon after Bernardo had left them in the morning ; that the disease, happening to be at its crisis, some febrifuge powders had been administered with saving effect ; that a tranquil sleep of some hours had succeeded : that the patient had awakened relieved : and, although weak and surprised at the solitude in which he found himself, had donned his only remaining suit of clothes and, for the last half hour, had enjoyed the blessed sensation of restored health and consciousness.

"But, Bernardo," he exclaimed in answer to his servant's continued declarations of joy, "I feel that I have long fasted. Get me something to eat and a cup of small wine, I pray thee."

"Subito, this instant, Signor Conte," answered the man, glad of an opportunity of leaving the room that he might recover from the surprise which had fallen upon him.

"But, Bernardo," continued the Count, recalling him ere he had passed the threshold, "while I was looking over my wardrobe—no lengthy task, heaven knows!—I missed the Otranto jewel: where hast thou stowed it away? I have bethought me how to employ it."

"Oimé, Signor Conte," ejaculated the man thus suddenly taken aback, "I have myself been obliged to employ it for your Excellency's service. I had not half a ducat left with which to buy you food or pay the doctors who have worked so blessed a cure. I have been obliged to sell the precious trinket."

"Right, Bernardo; 'tis what I had been planning to do; that I might procure me arms and equipment with which to join the old hunchback sailor, who, unless I dreamed it, offered to befriend me. What didst thou obtain for my father's precious relic?"

"Oimé, Signore, but two hundred ducats," replied Bernardo. "The Jews and Lombards

and all the men of money have fled from this afflicted city; and the sack of Rome has made mere jewellery so common that little can now be obtained for it in honest barter."

"It would seem so, in sooth," replied Alfonso: "for five thousand ducats ought not to have purchased that jewel. However, get me some food; for I almost faint. The produce of thy marketing will suffice to buy me arms; and the future must be as God wills."

Although surprised at his master's desponding tone—for he was yet not aware of the ill-success of his appeal to the Viceroy—Bernardo Accorto made no reply; but went to procure the refreshments which were so evidently needed.

Many days, however, elapsed ere the young Count was able to leave his room and again walk in the ways of men.

CHAPTER VIII.

THE PLAGUE.

Non si tien conto di chi accatti o presti :
Accatta, e fa pur debito se sai,
Che non è creditor che ti molesti.
Se pur ne vien qualch' un di che tu hai
Doglie di testa, e che ti senti al braccio,
Colui va via senza voltarsi mai.
Se tu vai fuor, non hai chi ti dia impaccio,

to his follower when the latter entered his room one fine morning at the end of May—"take what remains of them and follow me. I feel myself strong enough now to begin a more active life, and will equip myself in fitting style to join the good hunchback."

"Not so, Signor Conte, not so!" exclaimed Bernardo. "Brighter prospects open upon us. Your cousin Don Vespasiano of Colonna is dead."

"And how will his death affect my fortunes?" coldly asked the Count.

"How! *cospetto!*" exclaimed Bernardo. "Pardon me, Signor Alfonso: but can you suppose that his beautiful widow, who was always so well-inclined towards you, will retain your property at Amalfi which the Viceroy had granted to her husband?"

"Truly, Donna Giulia was always my very good friend," replied the young man. "But I much doubt whether it will be permitted to her to restore my little villa. However," he

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forego the chance of booty which others obtained by indiscriminate robbery.

"I do not think that your Signoria has anything to fear from infection," observed Bernardo to his patron as they wended their way amongst more horrible sights than we can describe. "I take it that the illness which laid on you so long and from which I was the blessed means of recovering you, was a species of plague which, according even to the opinion of Christians, will shield you from other attacks."

"Perhaps it was," replied Alfonso: "but then, my poor fellow, thou hast undergone no such protection. Why wilt thou not leave this city of the dying and seek thy fortunes elsewhere? I can do nought now to advance them."

"Heed them not, Signor Conte," replied the man. "I doubt not that I shall find ways of advancing mine own fortunes while I faithfully serve your Eccellenza. And as to the

catching of this plague, I hold thereupon the opinion of my old masters, the Turks."

"Hold the opinion of the Turks!" exclaimed Procida with pious horror.

"Only in the matter of the plague, Eccellenza," replied Bernardo. "I trust that, on all other matters, I am as good a Christian as my neighbours. Only, having taken my name for my motto, and being more Accorto than most, I generally perform what they only blunder about. For example, I have prospects of reward in your noble service which neither you nor they dream of."

"I wish thy vanity," retorted the Count somewhat sharply, "I wish thy vanity would allow thee to keep thy prospects to thyself. Whether they be for my good or for my evil, I am wearied by the insinuations which thou dost of late so often throw out. However, I doubt not thy truth; but tell me what is thy belief in this matter of the plague?"

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 come."

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hold sacred that I felt that some misfortune would overtake us. And so it did. You were obliged to fly from your native country, and to save your life at the expense of your property."

"Still I say it is all nonsense," answered Alfonso. "But methinks," he added, "that thou art taking me a long way round to reach the knave who is to furnish my equipment."

"'Tis to avoid the most infected quarters of the city," replied the servant. "But although we must now venture into the Strada Carbonara, you have nothing to fear, Signore. I will answer for it."

"Nor do I fear," answered the Count. "Life smiles not upon me so that I should fear to die. To judge, however, by the sounds that we hear, this is the only part of the city that is not afflicted."

Discordant, however, as were the sounds of merriment which rent his ear, they prepared not Alfonso for the sight which he witnessed

when, turning round an angle, he entered this populous street. Before the open doors of a half-underground cellar, stood a large waggon piled with the bodies of the dead, which were tossed one above the other in horrid disarray :—there exposing the grizzled head of some venerable elder lying upon the sunken, bare, and discoloured bosom of a scarce-budding girl; while beside and entwined amid the straggling limbs of both, the corpses of a wealthy notary and a widely-known beggar were closely entangled :—before the doors of the cellar, stood a waggon thus hastily, indecently, and ruthlessly loaded : while, within the vault itself, a score of Neapolitans, whose features bore the stamp of every vice and whose limbs still carried the shortened shackle of galley slaves, were intermixed with a lot of Turkish slaves, whom the Viceroy had joined with them in the office of burying the dead—or rather of clearing the streets. Within the cellar, they all sat commingled in drunken

good-fellowship: beside them, lay many a precious garment, many a glittering gem, trodden amid the wine flasks which bestrewed the floor around. They appeared to be taking a parting or a starting cup, for many a full goblet was uplifted in the air while they all stood around; and, at the full pitch of their discordant voices, screamed forth words to the following effect:

Evviva the plague! may it flourish say we,
For the plague gives us freedom, wealth, wine, jollity.
What has opened our prison and broken our chain?
What has bid us come forth over thousands to reign?
'Tis the plague! 'Tis the plague! May it never decay!
May war, famine, and pestilence flourish for aye!

Evviva the plague! They were dying around,
And had no one to hurry their dead underground;
So they proffered us pardon and bade us go free:—
We oblig'd them. Ha! Ha!—jolly sextons are we!
With a cart and a pitchfork we clear out the way;
And we drink to their rest:—we leave others to pray!

Then evviva the plague! For the dead ones, you know,
Can't look after their gold when we toss them below.
And to handle the corpses their friends are afraid—
So *we* handle them, boys. Let us drink to the trade!
Let us drink to the plague: it avenges our cause!
To the plague, boys, which levels rank, fortune and laws!

"What horrid wretches and what horrid sentiments!" exclaimed Alfonso of Procida to his attendant as he turned from the cellar, the convivial group, and the cart-load of corpses.

"Be not so dainty, young Signore," cried out one of the revellers, addressing our hero as he hurried past.

"Nay let him pride himself while he may," replied another; "his turn will soon come."

"Aye;" cried a third, "and his threadbare jerkin will not hinder the pitchfork from fixing its hold in his proud stomach for all he now bears himself so stiffly. I say, Gioacchino! we'll chuck him in to-morrow beside that old beggar-woman who lies rotting on the steps yonder."

"Aye; and if it please Allah," said a turbaned ruffian, "his conceited follower shall ride in the same bier!"

"Nay; nay; Bernardo is a good fellow," answered one of the Neapolitan galley slaves. "Long may he live and prosper!"

It is not to be supposed that the objects of these pleasing remarks tarried on their road to listen to them. On the contrary; they hurried on still more rapidly than before, in the hope of escaping not only from the drunken revellers but also from the sad scenes around them. But hasten as they would, similar objects still environed them on every side. Dead bodies lay in every corner, or encumbered the steps of every church: dying wretches aloud proclaimed their sins to terrified priests and craved a hasty absolution before they expired: ferocious lazzeroni, armed with long knives, cut their way through the garments of the corpses, or even assailed the living spectres as they crawled along, and wrested from them their purses or whatever article of jewellery or clothing they might chance to covet: and occasionally a dead body was cast from a window aloft and fell, in horrid deformity, upon the pavement beside them.

"Thanks be to Allah, I mean to San Gennaro!" exclaimed Bernardo. "We are now near the store of the merchant to whom I am leading you."

"Thanks, indeed, be to San Gennaro!" responded Alfonso, shuddering.

"But, better still, per Bacco!" cried the follower. "Here Giuseppe himself comes along the street. We can deal with him on our way to his store."

A hale middle-aged man was advancing, indeed, towards them at a brisk pace. He either moved aside himself whenever he neared any object that appeared to him redolent of contagion, or, with a long staff, motioned to all who drew near to keep at what he considered a safe distance from his own person. Perceiving Bernardo, he instantly greeted him by sign and drew towards him.

"Keep thou on that side of the pitch fire in the centre of the street, friend," he cried

when they were within ear shot, "and I will stand on this side, so that we shall not infect one another."

Suiting his motions to the word, he tripped up towards one of the blazing tar-barrels which uselessly flamed in every street. Bernardo Accorto and the Count drew near on the opposite side, and the former was about to declare his business to the merchant, when even he turned pale on seeing him clap his two hands to his head, stagger giddily round for a few seconds and then fall a lifeless corpse beside the burning embers.*

"Poor devil!" exclaimed Bernardo. "However," he added, "all is for the best. I can now help your Signoria at his warehouse while there is no one there to demand payment!"

"Rascal!" muttered Alfonso between his teeth.

"Present payment!" continued Bernardo

* Giannone Istoria.

observing his master's expression. "Of course, I meant present payment. No one in Naples would suspect Bernardo Accorto of intending to act dishonestly: although, to be sure, the Conte di Chiaja and the Duke of Somma have both lately broken open warehouses and had the merchants beaten to death when they came to complain of the act. But these are great nobles who keep paid bravos in their palaces. We are poor enough to be honest."

"A truce to thy endless chatter!" exclaimed Alfonso impatiently; "and tell me if that house which is closed up be not the residence of Carlo de' Massimi who was my steward—when I had anything to look after?"

"Sicuro, Eccellenza, it is so," the servant replied more respectfully.

At the same instant, the door of a handsome house, adjoining the uninhabited one, opened; and one, in the dress of the attend-

ants upon the sanitary boards which exercised supreme controul in the city, came forth and loudly called for some of the undertakers who, as we have seen, were amusing themselves in the neighbouring wine vault. No one, therefore, answered the appeal.

"All you then who hear me," he then cried, "know that his Eccellenza the supreme president of the board of health, prays some one to enter the adjoining house and to drag forth and cast into the tumbrils all the dead he may find there: and, in reward for the service, he will secure to whoever performs it the full possession and enjoyment of whatever property the house may contain. His Eccellenza," continued the man, addressing some who stopped on their way to listen, "his Eccellenza is not well, and has only just been informed that the house is shut up, and that all the owners are supposed to have died since yesterday. Being next door to himself, he is naturally afraid—"

"And calls on us to go and handle the corpses to save him!" exclaimed a listener scoffingly.

"When we all know that the poor devil's house can contain nothing but the bodies of himself and family," added another of the group. "Why the man was as poor as we are, amico!"

"Let the bodies lie there and rot!" cried a third fellow fiercely. "His excellency who is so chary of his own life, chose to rescue from us, two days ago, one of the poisoners who have created all this misery."

"Aye, aye;" chimed in a wild-looking fisherman, "I will swear that the powder he carried never came from the miller. It was prepared to throw upon us poor lazzari."*

"Bernardo," said Count Alfonso aside, "I will go into the poor man's house. I am indebted to him for some past assistance. This timid president is not unlikely to have

* This has been a popular feeling in all plagues in Italy.

him dragged out before he be really dead. Follow thou me," he added, as he turned in at the doorway.

"We undertake the job," said Bernardo Accorto loudly to him who had made proclamation. "We shall claim all the treasures we find within!" he added shrugging his shoulders with true Neapolitan grimace which drew forth a hearty peal of laughter from the little crowd around. Then, with assumed importance and overweening self-conceit, he slowly followed his master into the house of death.

CHAPTER IX.

OUR HEROINE.

Who has not proved how feebly words essay
To fix one spark of beauty's heavenly ray ?
Who doth not feel, until his aching sight
Faints into dimness with its own delight,
His changing cheek, his fainting heart confess
The might—the majesty of loveliness !
Such was Zuleika—such around her shone
The nameless charms unmarked by her alone ;
The light of love, the purity of grace,
The mind, the music breathing from her face,
The heart whose softness harmonized the whole ;
And oh ! that eye was in itself a soul !

BYRON.

ALFONSO of Procida entered the halls on the ground floor of the house which he had undertaken to visit. All was in its evidently-usual array ; but the silence of death reigned

over all. It is a dreary, an anxious feeling that which is induced by such a trial as he now encountered; by such a doubt as that which now occupied his mind. Although not acknowledging any particular interest in the person whose house he was now invading, whom he had but slightly known, and of the members of whose family, if family he had possessed, he was completely ignorant, yet did the general interests of humanity supply the place of any individual, any personal, feeling. It was indeed affecting and strange to be wandering alone over the house of one to whose life or death all seemed to be avowedly indifferent; of one whom his nearest neighbour now, perhaps gratuitously, imagined to be a corpse, deserving of no farther regard than that it should not become a source of contagion to himself. The young man felt as though he were an actor in one of those parabolic stories recited by pious people to warn the thoughtless world-

lings that they are wandering in valleys of death, surrounded by unknown and secret dangers which may, at any time, overwhelm and destroy them.

He passed up the wide stairs into the family sitting room. There was the desk covered with papers; the table strewn with ledgers; there, also, was the embroidery frame, the little book of prayers, and the rosary; but still silence hung over all. "And those," thought the wanderer to himself, "those to whom this small room was a blessed home of frugality, piety, and, perhaps, of the purest affections, now lie uncared for in some corner of their dwelling, while their neighbours only think of them as of so much carrion infecting the breath of life!"

He passed on into the next room. It was a bed-room, and here, at length, was evidence of that fate in which he alone in all the world appeared to be interested. Upon the bed, lay a middle-aged female. The plague had evidently

done its work upon her some time before. The marks, not to be mistaken, were there. Beside the bed, across a low stool, lay the figure of a man advanced in life. He lay on his chest, and his head and arms hung down on one side, while his feet rested on the floor beyond. The face was not visible: but Alfonso recognised the curled and grizzled locks of his late steward. The figure moved not, and it was impossible to say whether it lived or had ceased to live. To touch it were to incur danger wilfully. As though afraid of the sound of his own voice, Alfonso gently called it by name. No answer was returned. He watched it. It heaved not with the slightest show of respiration. Silence brooded on all; and it was evident that death was there.

With somewhat of a nervous tremour, to be excused in one who was himself just risen from a bed of sickness, Procida hastily quitted the rooms and sought the head of the

stairs. He had seen enough ; and was anxious to regain the air and sunshine of the street. But ere he had descended two steps, a faint voice, apparently from the floor above, rivetted his attention. A moment, he stood undecided : but his natural feelings of humanity soon again predominated ; and he courageously, but slowly, began to ascend the second flight. Again he heard that appealing voice.

" Father ! " it faintly exclaimed, " why will you not come to me, father ? "

Alfonso hastened forwards ; and entered a room, at the head of the stairs, the door of which was but partially closed. This, also, was a bed-room ; and he gave thanks to the Almighty as he deemed himself in time to save one life in this house of affliction.

A bed, encircled by neat white muslin hangings, was before him : but upon that bed, what a vision met his sight ! A young girl laboured to uplift herself upon the pillows,

while she gazed anxiously towards the door and again murmured the name of her father. She wore no head dress. Her brown hair was dishevelled and fell around her in graceful profusion. Her full hazle eyes beamed with joy, but with a feverish excitement. A slight flush, more of health than of illness, crimsoned her delicate cheek and blended, in smiles of expectation, into the ruby freshness of her full quivering lips and dimpled chin. Her white night-dress, parted in front, displayed a bosom of alabaster worthy to support a head of such exquisite loveliness. Alfonso trembled to think that all the bright flush of beauty before him had its origin in the deadly malady which had smitten all around.

“Dear father,” softly exclaimed the invalid, as our hero passed the threshold; but the greeting was quickly changed into some inarticulate words of terror; and, perceiving a stranger, she hastily veiled her eyes behind hands that could have belonged to no less

beautiful form, and timidly shrunk down and drew the coverlid over those now roseate shoulders.

"Fear me not, poor girl," said Alfonso gently as he advanced towards the bed. "I would relieve and help you."

"Holy Mary, shield me!" murmured the fair child, still covering her face with her hands. "Where, oh where is my father?"

"Tell me who you are, lady, and I will strive to fulfil your wishes," asked the Count.

Now the habits of life of Alfonso of Procida had induced an earnestness of manner, a modesty and truthfulness of expression which, whatever self-sufficient coxcombs may fancy, is much more captivating to the imagination of every woman than the most brilliant address of the most sprightly Don Juan: indeed, the noble biographer of that personage felt this when he ascribed to him something of the same manner, and declared that "modesty was oft its own reward." An appearance of earnestness and virtue begets trust and con-

fidence: and when such an appearance is united to a handsome person, such as that with which our hero was endowed, we venture to assert that it will, at once, secure the confiding and friendly predispositions of every woman. But, oh friendship!....

The young girl gazed timidly, but enquiringly on the stranger; and felt that she might rely upon him, might confide in him as in a tried friend.

"Tell me, tell me, Signore," she said, "if you have seen my father and mother?"

"I have seen them, dear lady; becalm yourself, I pray you, for your own sake. Your father is too unwell to come to you."

"Gracious heaven!" cried the girl starting up and clasping her hands, "then he is dead, and my mother also!"

She was too weak to support herself, and fell back on her pillow in a swoon.

With gentle devotion, Alfonso bathed her temples with some essence from a bottle that

stood near: and heedless of all danger of infection to himself, he moistened the palms of her little burning hands, and soon brought her back to consciousness.

"He is dead," she said, "I know it, I know it. And my poor mother also. He told me that she was very ill when I saw him last evening. Oh, she was dead then; and *he* must have caught it from her"—

Her sentences were interrupted by sobs, and she now wept profusely. Alfonso allowed her to indulge her tears; and when her paroxysm was somewhat appeased said "But you, yourself, dear Signorina: you surely are not suffering from this dreadful malady?"

"No: no: would that I were!" she passionately replied. "I was one of the first in Naples who felt it; and my poor parents tended me and I soon recovered. This is but a sort of ague—a low fever brought on by the malaria and weakness. Oh that I could have nursed my dear father!"

"It was too sudden, lady," answered the Count. "But let *me* assist you as *he* would have done. I bless God that you, too, are not smitten by this fearful disease: only tell me what I can do to hasten your recovery, and never was attendant more devoted than you will find Alfonso of Procida."

"The Count of Procida!" exclaimed the invalid shrinking timidly. "I have heard my poor father speak of you, Signore."

"I was known to him, and would protect his beautiful daughter," replied Alfonso. "Tell me only what I can do. Where are your servants?"

"Gone, the ungrateful ones!" said the poor child. "My father told me that, when they first found that my mother was unwell, they fled from the house for fear of infection."

"Do not regret them, sweet lady. I will supply their place. I will tend upon you more devotedly than they could have done. But you were calling for something before I

came in;" he continued earnestly: "surely you must want refreshment, if no one has been near you since last evening?"

The lady was about to answer, when the sound of heavy footfalls on the stairs caught her attention and alarmed her afresh. Alfonso listened.

"'Tis but my servant," he said; recognising the step of one whose very existence he had forgotten during the tumultuous feelings awakened within the last half hour. "I will send him to procure all that can be needed for you."

Now although he well knew that, during the dreadful plague which then afflicted Naples, men were almost the only attendants who could be persuaded to wait upon ladies, even of the highest rank, and to perform all those personal offices round the bed of sickness from which the female attendants had timidly shrunk; (—and sad effects of the intercourse thus introduced were afterwards seen:)

and although, as an Italian, his feelings of propriety were less outraged than ours would be, by admission to the chamber of a lady,—yet had a sentiment already intruded itself upon the Count of Procida which made him wish to guard, with unusual delicacy, the privacy of the fair girl whose protector he had constituted himself. He moved, therefore, hastily from the bed-side, and encountered Bernardo Accorto on the stairs, without the room. His manner was anxious; and Bernardo, misjudging the purport of it, exclaimed, “Perdona, Signore, I know that I have tarried long; but I thought it advisable to inspect, in succession, every floor of this house; and to look for your Eccellenza’s title deeds in the drawers of the dead steward; since this house and all it contains is, assuredly, our lawful conquest.”

“Silence, I command thee!” cried Alfonso at length, after having vainly tried by signs to stay his follower’s profuse excuses for an

absence which he would not have observed had it been four times as long. "Silence, I command thee. Go instantly and procure whatever refreshments thou canst, that are proper for an invalid: find something nice and delicate, and hasten back with it hither quickly. I will wait upon the lady meanwhile. Begone!"

"Diamine!" exclaimed Bernardo to himself as he again descended the stairs. "The *lady* forsooth! So the impassive Count of Procida is caught at last! Ha! ha! ha! Something 'nice and delicate' must it be:—just like her ladyship, I warrant me. Who can it be, however? I knew not that the old steward had any family:—but then I was never more than once in his house. But, per Bacco," he continued, "let us procure the 'delicacies' and hasten back to get a peep at this unexpected treasure which the Signor Presidente of the board of health has vouchsafed to us."

He left the house and proceeded on his errand.

Meanwhile during the few minutes which it had cost the Count to silence the apologies of his follower and to give his own directions, the invalid had, with a woman's tact and quickness, somewhat smoothed the silken coverlid around her; twined up her profuse and glossy brown hair into one of the longest and strongest cables ever woven by Love; and cast a slight Indian kerchief of fairest embroidery around her white and slender throat. These little arrangements are soon made by a practised female hand; and she looked more composedly upon Alfonso of Procida when he re-entered her room and seated himself on a settle at the head of her bed. With heartfelt satisfaction that beamed through his lustrous eyes, the young man returned that bewitching smile; and timidly raising her fair hand to his lips, according to the gallant usages of the time and country, he assured her that refreshments would quickly be brought; and that, if his respectful devotion and care could promote

her restoration to health, that health would soon again be hers.

"Indeed," she said, "I have been much better of late and know not what can have made me feel so weak this morning : unless it be that I have touched no food since my dear father left me yester eve."

"Truly you have accounted for it, sweet lady," Alfonso replied : "and full soon, I doubt not, those beautiful eyes will regain their wonted splendour."

The young man spoke with animation ; for, indeed, his admiration of the fair girl, whom he hoped to be the means of rescuing from death, was already beyond bounds. And most lovely, in truth, were the features, most gentle, intelligent, bright, and loveable was the expression of the fair helpless and innocent-looking girl before him ! We have not attempted to describe her : a lover's pen alone could do justice to her beauty. To a lover's imagination we entrust the portraiture : let

every reader endow our outline with each spell which he himself has ever felt to be most bewitching; then may our fair creation—adorned like children whom divers favouring fairies bless—be imaged forth in her own natural loveliness.

“Forgive me, Count of Procida,” she timidly said, overcome by a recurring feeling of weakness: “but I should be so thankful would you open the window and admit the cool air to fan my cheek. ’Twould be so refreshing !”

Alfonso did as he was requested; and was agreeably surprised, on throwing wide the casement, to see a verdant garden beneath instead of the close and horror-encumbered street upon which he had expected to look down. The room of the invalid, as he now discovered, was situated at the back of the house; and enjoyed a prospect of the gardens attached to the adjoining mansion of the timid president. There orange trees perfumed the air with their blossoms, while their ruddy

fruit glistened in the noon-day sun: there flowers of every hue blended in the grateful shade: there water was thrown up from a spreading jet, and, after spangling the air with the glitter of a thousand diamonds, fell back, in a refreshing rain, upon the wide bason and the graceful marble statues that stood on pedestals around. But the smell of sweet flowers was not the only fragrance which arose from the narrow precincts of this Italian town-garden. In the centre walk, stood a large brazier charged with odoriferous drugs and sanitary compositions prepared to defend the noble proprietor from the noxious vapours and miasmata of the plague: the smoke and steam of these rose, in billowing eddies, high above the surrounding shrubs, and carried sweet and pungent odours up to the very window at which Alfonso stood.

“Oh, it is very refreshing!” murmured the invalid half aloud. “Would that my poor parents had occupied this room!”

Alfonso turned him to console her: but started as he beheld, standing within the doorway, a figure which we must describe in the next chapter.

CHAPTER X.

CONSALVO BERRETTA.

Sed primum nympham longa donate salute,
Atque hæc submisso dicite verba sono :
Hæc tibi vir quondam, nunc frater, casta Neæra,
Mittit et accipias numera parva rogat,
Teque suis jurat caram magis esse medullis,
Sive sibi conjux, sive futura soror :
Sed potius conjux. Hujus spem nominis illi
Auferet extincto pallida Ditis aqua.

TIBULLUS.

THE figure which had arrested the attention of the Count of Procida was that of a very tall man of erect and military carriage, but

arrayed in a garb which rendered doubtful the calling or pursuits of the wearer. A long flowing robe, not unlike some of those worn by the many religious orders in Italy; a long grizzled beard even, which some of those orders do not object to—would not alone have drawn much attention: but a naked dagger thrust into the girdle of the frock, a steel head-piece surmounted by a long phrygian cap of black cloth embroidered with a red cross, which drooped low over his shoulders; above all, a large cross of ebony, seven or eight feet high, which he carried in his left hand and which appeared to answer every purpose of a walking staff, or even of a defensive and offensive weapon,—these were unusual and apparently inconsistent attributes to any dress, and might well draw particular attention to him who bore them. Across his left shoulder, but hanging from his right hand, the stranger had slung a large bag—similar to those now worn by mendicant confraternities—which

descended to his thighs and appeared even to overbalance his figure by its weight. His features were marked: his large black eye flashed angrily: his whole look was severe and menacing.

"So!" he exclaimed in a stern hollow voice while he moved not a muscle of his commanding and even noble figure: "So! so! A father and mother unburied in the house, and already a gallant."

"Santa Maria!" cried the invalid with a look of pleasure. "Holy father Consalvo, bless you for coming to me!"

"Dost *thou* deserve a blessing, Isidora?" sternly asked the figure.

"No, holy father; none deserve to be blessed by one so good as you: but surely, surely I deserve to be pitied," replied the poor girl giving way to a flood of tears.

"To be pitied, aye; if thou art not already consoled," answered the stranger somewhat mollified. "While she weeps, tell me, young

Sir, who art thou?" he continued addressing the Count, but still without moving from the place where he stood.

The young man came forward and said with as much calmness as he could command, "I was once Alfonso of Procida: I am now the vowed protector of that young lady from intrusion or insult."

"The Count of Procida!" exclaimed the stranger with what, in one of his severe cast of features, was evidently an expression of surprise. "All is yet well," he added, uplifting his heavy cross and waving it perpendicularly and transversely in the air. "All is yet well. I know thee, young man, and do homage to the high and honourable character I have ever heard of thee."

"Who is it that pays me this unexpected tribute of praise?" asked the Count.

"Men call me," replied the stranger with a look of proud humility, "men call me Consalvo Berretta."*

* See Giannoni for this historical personage.

"Give me your blessing, holy Consalvo," exclaimed Alfonso, bending on one knee.

Again the strange figure waved his cross in the air above the prostrate youth.

"But tell me," he said, "how all this desolation has fallen on this house:—how I find thee here!"

Alfonso briefly recounted all he knew and all that he had gathered from the broken sentences of the young invalid; and concluded by protesting his willingness to protect and tend upon her until other protectors might appear.

"Or in spite of other protectors," muttered the stranger slowly. Then yielding to what appeared to be deep meditation, he bent his head and rested his forehead on the arm of the great cross he bore. For some minutes he stirred not. At length, he appeared to awaken, as from a trance, and gazed proudly around.

"It must be so," he muttered: "better take what security we can."

"Count Alfonso of Procida," he continued drawing himself up to the full height of his very commanding figure, "I have said that I know thy character: I know also the character of Isidora: God never created a purer nor a more happily-tempered child—nay nor a more beautiful one. Thou hast looked upon her: thou wilt love her: thou must love her: thou canst not do otherwise. Such surpassing loveliness must win every disengaged heart. Kneel before me; and, in this house of death and upon this blessed cross, swear that thou wilt love her as a sister or as a wife."

"On mine honour, on my hopes of salvation I swear it!" exclaimed the young man, bending his knee as he devoutly kissed the sign of salvation.

"So may I in peace go forth again upon my wanderings!" ejaculated Consalvo. "Isidora," he continued drawing forth one of her hands, "thou for whose sake I have been

induced once more to tread the ways of men; thou hast heard the compact—fulfil thy part: be innocent and be happy. Consalvo Berretta's eye will be upon ye; and if either of ye fail, Consalvo Berretta carries a dagger as well as a cross. "But I would not threaten," he added, "I would not doubt such honour and such purity. Only wed ye not, Sir Count, until thou hast recovered thy forfeited paternal lands."

He joined their two hands together, and while Alfonso fervently pressed that of her he had so suddenly found and so suddenly won, again he waved the mighty cross above their heads.

"Yet think not, Count of Procida," he again spoke, "think not that I am inveigling thee to wed the beggarly daughter of thy beggarly steward." "There," he cried, casting from his shoulder the mighty wallet which fell with heavy clang upon the floor, "There is enough to prove that Isidora de' Massimi is no beggar;

and this is but a small instalment of that which her husband will receive. Thou dost remember, Isidora," he asked, pointing to the wall of the opposite side of the room, "thou dost remember where I stowed away the coffers which I brought last week?"

"The delicate nourishment, Signor Alfonso," exclaimed Bernardo Accorto pushing open the half-closed door and advancing a tray covered with a smoking mess.

Consalvo turned sharply round, and the face of the servant assumed an ashen paleness as he shrunk back terrified and trembling to the stairs.

"One word before I leave ye," slowly interposed Consalvo: "Beware of that man."

"But, holy padre, you will not leave me?" exclaimed Isidora beseechingly. "You will not leave me a desolate orphan: oh stay and protect me; of what avail to me can all this countless gold now be? I have no claim to the

donations which you have received from the faithful."

"It is thine by right," replied Consalvo, "nor would I be encumbered with it. His hermitage, his cross, and his God be the portion of Consalvo Berretta. Fare ye well."

Erect and with a glow of stern enthusiasm, he turned him and left the room. He encountered Bernardo on the landing below.

"Traitor!" he exclaimed, "beware! thou hast heard my words above. Betray their import, and the evil eye which thou dost dread shall track thy course in life. Thy after fate is already doomed!"

He smote the floor with the end of his cross and left the house.

And now Alfonso of Procida assiduously proffered to Isidora de' Massimi—as he had heard the fair child called—the warm strengthening nourishment which Bernardo had just procured: and now he waited upon her and held the small basin which she was too weak

to uplift, and anticipated her every wish with a gentleness and a tenderness which he scarcely strove to conceal. The quickness with which all Italians yield them to the mastery of the tender passion is proverbial: who, therefore, shall wonder that our hero already felt himself half vanquished, and willingly bowed him to the thrall of one so very lovely? His heart had never before been engaged: assuredly his eye had never lighted on charms so perfect. Besides, a holy recluse, revered through all the country had, in some sort, charged him with the duty of fostering and protecting the fair girl; had given her to him—certainly as a sister; were he so pleased, as a bride. Gladly and proudly had he accepted the trust; and faint were the resolutions which he made not to overstep the claims of the first of these ties unless he were well assured that his pretty charge were deserving of the latter.

“For I know not,” he said half-seriously to himself, “I know not whether her heart be

not already engaged. I know not what are her principles, what her tastes, what her feelings: nay, I know not even whether her form be not like that of the old admiral! A lovely head is not always placed upon an equally perfect body—nor is it always accompanied by a heart such as I should wish my wife to own.”

These prudent resolutions, these efforts at self-persuasion only proved how necessary self-persuasion and resolution already were; how urgent the danger had already become.

“And who, dearest Signorina,” enquired Alfonso, “who really is the strange person who has just left us and who seemed so interested in you? I have only heard the popular reports concerning him.”

“He is a pious saint in truth,” answered Isidora, “but a very extraordinary man. Indeed, Signore,” she added, blushing to the tips of her small rounded fingers, “indeed you must not attend to all he said.”

"What; may I not love you as a sister, Isidora?" asked the young man coaxingly.

"Oh yes, yes, Signore," quickly answered the young girl. "Do so, and the poor orphan will be very grateful. Alas! I have now no one left to love me!" she murmured, while the tears coursed more quickly down those flushed cheeks.

"I will do so, Isidora," said Alfonso, gently drying her tears with a handkerchief. "And padre Consalvo will doubtless return and live with you; will he not?"

"Not so, I fear," she replied; "he now seldom leaves his cell in the rocks of the island of Caprea; where he is so much sought after by the Neapolitans who revere his sanctity and his rigid virtue."

"Did he always lead this pious life?" the Count of Procida asked, wishing to withdraw the thoughts of the mourner from her own grief.

"It is said but for the last twenty years or

so. He was a military man in his youth and high in the confidence of the native kings of Naples: but God has opened his eyes and drawn him to His service."

"But wherefore does he wear so unusual a dress?" asked Alfonso.

"I know not: I have seen him but once before in this house and know him only by public report: but I believe he thinks that the dress draws attention and enables him to do more good. Indeed, people have now named him Consalvo Berretta,* after the strange cap that he wears."

"My absence during these wars," Alfonso said, "has doubtless prevented me from hearing more particulars of him. But now, dear Isidora, as he has left you under my charge, I must pray you to try and get some rest after all the excitement you have undergone. Meanwhile, I will take care that no harm befalls you, while I make such arrangements

* Berretta is Italian for cap.

as become your brother. You will trust in your brother, dear Isidora?" he kindly asked.

"My poor dear father and mother!" she exclaimed, sobbing convulsively. "I understand what you mean; and will trust, and thankfully trust, all to you. But take up that sack of gold and do not spare it for this holy purpose."

Remembering the state of his own finances, Alfonso helped himself largely from the pretended wallet of the recluse which he found to be filled with pieces of gold of the value of forty ducats each. The wealth in that bag alone was immense. With difficulty, he then dragged it across the room and placed it in the concealed recess beside half a dozen large coffers which he found there. The invalid followed him with her eyes, and when he again approached the bed to take a short leave of her, she timidly put forth her hand and grasping his, whispered, "See all done piously and reverently and I will bless you."

The young man pressed the trembling hand to his lips, and not trusting himself to speak, quickly left the chamber.

But although exhausted by the long-enduring fast as well as by the agitation which she had recently undergone, sleep came not for some time to the anxious mind of Isidora de' Massimi. The thought that her dear parents were about to be carried forth and laid in their last home by a stranger without receiving one parting embrace, one parting look from her, their only child, this painful thought long agitated her feelings. Prayer was her only resource; and long and fervently she prayed to the Father of all that he would receive them from this their earthly home into his everlasting dwellings. The mind of all had been so long familiarized with anticipations of sudden death, had been so long steeped in horrors, that our poor invalid felt not the bereavement to be so sudden as it really was: still

she duly and affectionately mourned her loss, although it was with a grief devoid of the violent paroxysms which, at any other time, must have attended her great bereavement. She wept sincerely and calmly: she prayed fervently but with hope. And then intruded upon her mind a prayer to the spirits of those dear parents that they would watch over her their orphan child: and then came a thought of her own fearful isolation; of her youth and of her helplessness: and then the same train of feeling naturally led her on to think of him who had been sent to take care of her by what appeared to be a merciful dispensation of a protecting Providence; and then she thought how kind and gentle the young stranger had shown himself, and how thankful she ought to be for all his kindness: and then the question would suggest itself whether he would remember the strange language and manner in which the wild recluse had united their fates: but anon these

selfish ideas were chased away by the memory of her lost parents, and again she fervently prayed ; until at length, while prayer still arose from that guileless heart and those pretty lips, she sank gradually into a calm and refreshing sleep.

CHAPTER XI.

LOVE.

Look thou be true : do not give dalliance
Too much the rein : the strongest oaths are straw
To the fire in the blood : be more abstemious
Or else, good night your vow !

SHAKESPEAR.

"It is already done, Signor Alfonso," replied the man. "While you were fulfilling all the works of mercy above stairs, a worthy priest, attended by a few porters, entered the rooms and, without even asking leave of me, the body-servant of your Eccellenza who, according to the president's proclamation, are the rightful owner of all in this house, carried away the dead bodies with more shew of reverence than I have witnessed of late at the funeral of princes. Doubtless that holy iettatore had set them on: if so, I will answer for its being the only good or sensible thing he ever did in his life."

"And has all, then, been done?" asked the Count.

"All, Signor padrone. I did not object to the removal of the corpses. I judged that you would not insist upon retaining them so that the daughter was left. What a little angel she is!" he ejaculated with some feeling.

“Not a word disrespectful of that young lady, I charge thee!”

“Did I ever speak disrespectfully, Signore, of you or any in whom you were interested?” expostulated Bernardo. “I know that your old fanatic has spoken against me; but I trust, Eccellenza, I trust that the faithful services of my whole life to you and your noble family may well outweigh the insinuations of a strolling mountebank. When was I ever wanting in my service towards you? excepting, indeed, during those months of forced slavery which I could not avoid. I know well that he has tried to put you on your guard against me:—but wherefore? Because, Signor Conte, and I will candidly tell you the reason, because, when I went to raise that money from the miser of Rome, of which the corsairs afterwards robbed me, he interfered, as usual, in that which regarded him not, and provoked me to call him an ‘*iettatore*.’ This is the whole truth of the matter; and an

Iettatore I believe him to be: and will proclaim him so, although the rest of the world vie with one another in extolling him as a saint. I feel that he has an evil eye."

"Think not of him at all, my good fellow," replied his master soothingly; "and deem not that I shall weigh an unattested word against long and faithful services. Thou hast my full confidence; which, indeed, thou hast well earned."

With every appearance of humility and devotion, Bernardo seized his master's hand and raised it to his lips.

"Now then, my good Bernardo," continued the Count, "go out, I pray thee, and engage some worthy domestics to cleanse and purify this house and to wait upon the lady. Here is a piece of gold with which to attract their services."

"Diamine!" exclaimed the man in his usual free manner. "I knew the old Iettatore was an impostor; and look you, Signore, he

pretended that the wallet he carried on his back was, like that of other begging monks, full of pieces of bread and other broken victuals. The vagabond! I warrant me he has stolen the gold and brought it hither for some evil purpose of his own. I heard him mutter some preachment about hidden treasures. *Per Bacco!* I hope it may be so; because you know, Signor Alfonso, that all in this house is your own conquest—even to the little girl.”

“Not a word of her, I have before charged thee.”

“Not a word, not a word, *Eccellenza*. Only she was so very beautiful! If I had not been pre-occupied with looking at her during the moment when I took in the refreshment, I would have unravelled all the old Iettatore’s villany for your *Eccellenza*. However, *perdona*, Signore; I see that you are impatient. I go, then, [to lure some attendants with the old hypocrite’s gold. By

the bye, Signor Alfonso," he continued, returning, after having made a few steps towards the door, "I think that half the treasure found in the house ought to fall to me who braved the adventure with you: either the gold, or if your Eccellenza's heart be still unmoved, I would be satisfied—"

While Alfonso was meditating how far the impudence of his attendant would carry him, and how he should resent an excess of presumption, which he scarcely deemed possible, an aged and a younger woman, attended by a respectable man in livery, entered the room.

"How now, my good people," exclaimed Bernardo, glad of an opportunity of moving off from what he perceived to be the dangerous ground on which he was venturing, "is this house a public thoroughfare, that Iettatori, undertakers, and vagabonds of all sorts enter it at pleasure? How came ye in, I pray?"

"With the master key, Signore," replied

the old woman addressing the Count. "We are the old and tried servants of the family who were driven away by the dreadful plague. The holy Consalvo has sought us out, and sent us back again to be entirely under the orders of your Eccellenza and the dear Signorina. Oimé! Oimé! there is no longer any fear of taking the infection from our poor masters."

The old woman raised her kerchief to her eyes; and seemed truly affected.

All these considerate arrangements made by the Recluse, Consalvo, released the Count of Procida from a weight of cares which it would have been unpleasant to him to fulfil. And when, some hours afterwards, she whom he considered as his fair charge, awoke refreshed, and strengthened, and consoled by seeing old domestics around her, he could scarcely persuade himself of the reality of all that had occurred during this eventful day. An isolated, a friendless wanderer, without a

home, without any ties of affection, without more money than was necessary to equip him for an almost desperate undertaking, he had left his poor lodging, on that very morning: it was now evening, and he found himself domesticated in a house, small and poor indeed, but which he knew to contain immense wealth, to which he had, perhaps, even a legal right; but which, he doubted not, might be secured to him by her whom he prized far more than it; by her who already occupied that void in his affections which had oppressed him with such a sense of desolation; by her whom he could not but admire as the fairest, and as far as he was now able to judge, the gentlest and purest of women; by her whose deputed protector and guardian a few short hours had made him; by her whom he already loved with a devotion which his judgment could not approve and, therefore, would not own.

A few days more passed on in this magic

state of existence ; and Isidora de' Massimi was able to leave her bed and even to descend to the lower apartments. Joy encreased ! encreased admiration ! Procida's forced fears as to her carriage, as to her hitherto-concealed figure, were dissipated on the instant. No hunchback was Isidora ! A form, as perfect as the head which it carried was lovely, arose and greeted him as he returned from a morning excursion. A form rather above the middle-size, but without being tall : a form that had no angles, that was strung together by no wiry muscles : a form that was slim, without being spare : that was full and rounded, without being plump : a form that moved as one harmonious whole—that upbore its little head upon a neck that not only served as a support to features that beamed with the divinity of unsullied beauty, but which also moved with a life, a grace, an action of its own : a form replete with all the ease, all the elegance, all the repose inherent

to gentle birth: a form which obtruded no rigid hand in a direct line from an equally rigid side, but one whose gracefully-rounded arm, forming one continuous curve of beauty from the drooping shoulder whence it sprang, uplifted, by an undivided motion, a little flexible hand which quivered with modest fear as it placed itself in that of Alfonso:—such was the person of the young orphan whom Alfonso of Procida was permitted to love. Permitted!.....

“Dearest Isidora!” he exclaimed, “this is, indeed, a joyful surprise to see you restored from that bed of sickness.”

“It is my birthday, Signore;” she answered. “I am sixteen years old to-day: and I made an effort to leave my room that I might thank God for having given me my life a second time, and pray for those dear parents from whom I first received it.”

“But surely, Carina, you would not go forth to the church?”

"I now find myself too weak to do so, Signore," she replied.

"Call me not Signore, I pray thee," said the young man warmly. "Should a brother even, Isidora, be addressed so coldly?"

"It is better so," she softly replied : then, while a crimson blush overspread her features, she gently murmured "Believe in all my gratitude for your kindness, but I could not call you Alfonso."

Alfonso's judgment acquiesced in the decision of her innate delicacy. He urged her not ; but for some hours enjoyed that blissful interchange of sentiment, that delightful gratification of self-love which young hearts, predisposed to love one another, experience when, each talking of the other, each one hears his own praise breathed forth with an earnestness of expression that is most soothing to his secret vanity.

At length, however, more serious conversation ensued : and Alfonso told his fair charge

that he was bound by an oath to endeavour to recover his paternal property :—but the reader will recollect that the obligation was only conditional :—and that as she was now freed from all danger and waited upon by those in whom she had full confidence, he would endeavour to obey the call of honour, and either obtain the restoration of his land from the justice of the representatives of his sovereign or wrest it from their shame.

“I ought to prove my fidelity to the Emperor,” he said, “by supporting his cause at this time when it is so much depressed : so may I more confidently call upon him to render me justice. Besides, dear Isidora, I have a little estate near Amalfi, a little paradise from the beauty of its situation and the salubrity of its air. My kinsman, to whom it had been allotted, is now no more ; and I have hopes that it may be restored to me. If it is, you shall remove thither ; and the calm breezes of the Bay of Salerno will bring you that

health and strength which the heated air of Naples cannot so soon restore."

The thought of the proposed change of residence was grateful to the young convalescent, whose spirit was weighed down by the recollection of all she had suffered and all she had lost in that house; whose sight was distressed by the dreadful scenes which the streets of Naples still exhibited; while her head was wearied by the continued booming of the artillery of the besiegers which shook every wall. Fresh air, fresh scenes, fresh fruits and fresh vegetables have, indeed, attractions to those who rise from a bed of sickness.

Bernardo Accorto had procured for the Count a handsome equipment, such as that which he had been in search of on the eventful morning which first introduced him to this house of promise: and there was in his manner a demonstration of respect towards his master and of pride in his appearance when he followed him, fully equipped in his military

garments, into the presence of Isidora de' Massimi.

The smiling girl could not but feel that Alfonso of Procida was a very fine young man.

"Farewell, Osmanna," exclaimed Bernardo entering another room in the house, encased in a leathern jerkin covered by a glittering back and breast-piece and with his grizzled, but still raven locks, buried beneath a stout iron head-piece—"Farewell, Osmanna!" he said, addressing the young female servant who had resumed her place in the household of the young Lady de' Massimi. "I am going to the wars, Osmanna; and, perhaps, I shall be killed."

"Ch'importa—and who cares?" replied the black-eyed Neapolitan with a toss of her head.

"You care, Osmanna; yes, I know you care," the man continued in a whining tone.

"Insolente!" said the girl striving to look unconcerned.

"Hard-hearted Osmanna!" ejaculated Bernardo. "What, not one kind word before I go? Have all my protestations been uttered in vain?"

The large-eyed country beauty looked rather moved.

"I may be killed, Osmanna; and Osmanna says Who cares? Farewell, farewell, crudele!" he continued in a theatrical tone.

The girl threw her arms round his rattling corselet and wept aloud.

"Take heed, take heed, pretty Osmanna," exclaimed Bernardo. "Bruise not that ripe-brown cheek against this iron breast-plate. There, now I shall go forth and conquer," he said, laying his large hand upon her cheek: "Now I am doubly armed, for no hostile weapon can pierce the steel which the face of Osmanna has charmed. In shielding myself,

I shall think that I ward off blows from that dear head. So shall I indeed be safe!"

"Bernardo!" called the voice of his master. "Subito, Signor Conte," answered the follower, while the girl started away. "Farewell, then, my Osmanna," continued Bernardo, putting his arm round her broad waist and imprinting a kiss on her ruddy lips. "Farewell, Osmanna; farewell."

"What silly work making love is!" he said to himself as he hastened after his master. "How unworthy of a man of genius like me! Yet I believe that this is the way fools do it; and, in faith, I do like that girl. She is so simple!"

CHAPTER XII.

INTERVIEWS.

witnesses. The Marquis del Vasto and the hunchback sailor were now also present. It had been determined to attack the fleet with which Doria blockaded the harbour, and thus to endeavour to re-open the communication between the islands in the bay and the famished city. Upon the propriety of this measure, the council had determined with unwonted unanimity; and the attempt was to be made on the following morning. But thence had arisen the momentous question—who should command the armament? This was a question which personal jealousy and pride rendered of difficult solution.

“Most happy should I be,” the Prince of Orange observed with unusual urbanity, “most happy should I be to serve under so politic a leader as your Excellency, did I consider myself free to abuse the confidence which his Majesty has placed in me by appointing me his Lieutenant General in all Italy.”

"Such confidence, so far from being abused by submitting your troops to my command, would be most strongly repaid by the act; as it would show that the Emperor might calculate upon your Highness's judgment as well as valour."

"In faith methinks that the concession would shew but little judgment!" retorted the Prince; "although your Excellency did so much distinguish yourself by the successful surprise of an unsuspecting Pontiff."

"You do me too much honour," replied Don Hugo with forced politeness; "the distinction which fell to my lot on that occasion cannot be compared to that which your Grace achieved by acting as jailor to the same unfortunate old man, the while your troops rioted in his capital."

"Let me beseech you, my Lords," interposed del Vasto—

"The fact of the matter," exclaimed the Prince, "the fact of the matter is that, as the

Lieutenant of the Emperor, I will follow no other banner than mine own."

"And that I," asserted Don Hugo, "as Viceroy in this kingdom and, moreover, as Grand Admiral of Spain, will yield to no other my right to command the Neapolitan fleet."

"And much either of them knows about a fleet!" ejaculated the old Admiral aside to del Vasto.

"I must deeply deplore a dissension so fatal to the interests of the army," the latter exclaimed aloud.

"Nay," said the Prince of Orange, "the army shall never say that the pride or the rights of Philibert of Orange were fatal to it. Let us both resign our claims to command: if Don Hugo will agree to this proposal, I will support any leader who may take our place on this occasion."

"Willingly;" answered the Viceroy; "let the Marquis of Vasto lead the expedition;

and to show my zeal for the Emperor's service I will follow his banner as a private soldier."

"A better choice could not have been made;" said the Prince. "To del Vasto, I cheerfully resign my claims."

"I will not refuse the honour which you devolve upon me, my Lords," answered the Marquis; "because it may be a means of terminating this unhappy difference. But I know little of naval affairs, and must beg to associate in my command our good friend, the Admiral Giustiniano."

"I marvel that ye have the grace to ask it!" exclaimed the hunchback with a rough laugh. "However, some little show of judgment will thus have resulted from all this discussion."

"Excuse us now, my Lords," said del Vasto; "as our time for preparations is so short, we had need form our plans at once."

As the council broke up, a number of eminent leaders entered the hall and greeted familiarly the chiefs.

"Don Camillo Colonna, Don Cesare Fieramosca," exclaimed the Viceroy, "Good news for ye all! We have resolved to seek out old Doria to-morrow."

"And to avoid the question of any conflicting claims," said the Prince, "del Vasto has undertaken to lead us on to victory."

"Or to death," remarked Don Hugo. "There is now, Signori, no question between us save that of pre-eminent valour. None, I believe, have ever doubted that of Moncada; but to-morrow he will own no other distinction. To-morrow I will join in the fray as a private soldier."

"And I!"—"And so will I," cried the Prince of Salerno, the Cavelliere Fieramosca, the Colonnas and others of these high-spirited men. "To-morrow we will strive for honour only."

"Ha! my brave Count of Procida, art thou come amongst us?" exclaimed the Hunchback on observing our hero. "I thought that thou couldst not long remain idle."

"Thanks, Don Giustiniano," replied Alfonso. "I shall be proud to follow you to-morrow. But my present object is to ask your Highness," he continued turning to the Viceroy, "whether there be now any impediment to my resumption of a little estate of mine at Amalfi which had been granted to Don Vespasian Colonna. He is since dead; and I trust that neither my kinsmen of the same noble family, two of whom are here present, nor your Excellency, would wish to delay the effect of his Majesty's generous letters to me which I before placed in your hands."

"Rather than do so," answered the Viceroy looking round with a sneering smile, "rather than do so, your noble kinsmen, the Colonnas, have just left the room. And this, indeed, is not the time to grant pledges."

"It is ever time to do justice, Don Hugo," replied Alfonso.

"But to-morrow may save us the trouble, young Sir. You will, of course, testify your

boasted faith to the Emperor by joining our ranks. To-morrow may make you indifferent to these small matters. We defer our opinion until after to-morrow," continued the Viceroy moving off from the room with the air of one well satisfied with his own little manœuvre. All the officers present followed either him or del Vasto: and the Count of Procida saw that his claim was again successfully evaded.

But how little were his spirits affected by this evasion as he wended his way towards the Via Carbonara! How slight was the disappointment he now felt compared to that which had weighed down his spirit after his former fruitless application to the Viceroy! Then, perhaps indeed, the germs of the illness which had since laid him low had been already doing their work within him; and had produced that childish desperation of which he now thought with needless shame: but now he felt as though no illness, no merely corporeal weakness could ever deprive him of

buoyant and elastic hope. What, should *he* despair whose home was at the feet of the fairest girl in Naples? Should *he* despair, he who had little doubt that that fair girl had already made his heart the home of her pure affections? Not so; let them wrest from him, an they would, all his worldly possessions: they could not wrest from him that which he had already learned to prize far, far beyond the world itself. The same scenes of misery and distress met his eyes, on every side, as had overwhelmed him during his first walk to this distant street: death and horrors now, as then, surrounded him: famine and pestilence, now as then, were doing their dreadful work; and, now as then, called for his sympathy with the sufferers: but that sympathy did not now engross his whole soul; that sympathy did not now weigh him down and make him think that the only happy were the dead. He had found that which made him value life; which made him value himself as

believing himself to be of importance to one whose every wish was his law. He thought not of the injunction of the friendly Recluse—"Wed not until you have recovered your rights:" his step was light and buoyant; and he felt that a career of happiness and of prosperity was before him.

Alas, for these young feelings of early youth! Alas, for the disappointments which ever dull them, like clouds passing over a smiling vernal landscape!

"I congratulate you, Signor Conte," Isidora cried to him in cheerful tones as he entered her little saloon, "I congratulate you on the success of your application to the Viceroy."

"My application, dearest!" he replied starting as from a trance: "in very truth, I thought not of it. Though I ought to have done so; for I have been unsuccessful, and cannot yet take thee to inhale the fresh breezes of Amalfi."

"Never before did unsuccessful suitor bear his disappointment so lightly," observed Isidora in a somewhat saddened tone which we can, in no way, account for.

"It was because I thought of myself as a successful suitor for that to which I most aspire, that my bearing was so lightsome," replied Alfonso taking the fair girl's hand with tenderness.

Isidora cast down her eyes, but spoke not.

"Yes, dear Isidora; was I not presumptuous? I, who have never told thee that I was a suitor—and yet to dream of success—"

"Success, Alfonso!" murmured the young girl shyly, and gently endeavouring to withdraw her hand.

"Bless thee, bless thee, dearest, for calling me Alfonso!" he exclaimed while he more fervently grasped that little hand and held it to his lips. "And thou wilt not disappoint my hopes; thou wilt not tell me that I am presumptuous and unsuccessful?" he said.

The pressure of her tiny fingers upon the

hand which clasped it was her only answer to his passionate appeal.

"Thank God!" he cried folding her in his arms. "Oh, my Isidora, have I not cause to be thankful and happy!"

She resisted not; but after a few moments timidly raised her eyes to his; and, through the large tear that suffused them, gazed up with a smile that spoke of happiness, hope, purity, and trust. He bent him over her warm flushed cheek, and imprinted the first kiss which that soft happy face had ever received from any save parents' lips.

"This is very wrong, dear Alfonso," she said gently disengaging herself.

"No, dearest, not so;" he fondly answered as he seated himself beside her. "That holy Recluse, whom all Naples reveres, has permitted me to seek thee for mine, and truly told me that I could not look upon one so beautiful, so good, and so gentle without loving her as she deserves to be loved."

"But the holy Consalvo imposed one condition, Alfonso," the fair girl answered with some little archness.

"I will fulfil it, with God's help, dearest," Alfonso replied; "and even if I fail, so good a man will never require what is impossible."

"And Amalfi?" asked Isidora. "I own that I pant to leave this city of misery where I have suffered so much."

"It may not be as yet, dearest," replied the Count: "my demand has been evaded by the Viceroy and he has summoned me to join the Emperor's troops for to-morrow's engagement."

Isidora nervously grasped the hand in which her own little white palm still lay.

"Fear not, sweet one," Alfonso replied to this scarce-perceptible movement: "fear not. No harm will befall one whose fate God has united with thine. But I have been consulting with Bernardo; and if, after the battle, Don Ugo still refuses to admit my

claim, I will apply to my kinswoman, Donna Giulia, herself. Sure I am that she will not retain the property if she is permitted to restore it; or, at all events, that she will gladly receive us into the house in which she also resides for the sake of its beautiful and healthful situation."

"And when will you return to me, dear Alfonso, if the blessed Saint Gennaro protects you, as I trust he will?"

"Surely he will. If thy pure heart will pray to him for me, surely he will; and I shall see thee again to-morrow at sun-set."

In those days of endless war, custom induced ladies to behave rather with the heroism of Spartans than with the sensibility of modern females: and they saw those who were dear to them go forth to battle with a calmness which, in these times, would be deemed apathetic. But, indeed, war was then the business of life of every gentleman: and the fair sex would have lived in a state of con-

stantly-nervous trepidation had they yielded to it on every occasion like the present : wars, moreover, were then less dangerous than they now are. Italians, in particular, had been accustomed to engagements long-enduring, but bloodless : engagements of the combatants in which it might, perhaps, be truly said that

"From morn to noon, from noon to dewy eve
They fell :"

but skilful squires and pages having been at hand to uplift the fallen heroes and to prevent them from being smothered under their own armour, they had been able to play their part as lustily as before. Indeed the condottiere system, or the system of hiring leaders of eminence to engage with their mercenary followers in support of any cause that might offer good pay or plunder—tended to promote the immunities of warfare ; as these gallant heroes, acting upon the principle that

"He that is in battle slain
Can never rise to fight again,"—

were careful not to produce catastrophes which should put a stop to their own trade. Hence the endless duration of wars between petty states; and hence, also, that system of taking ransom for captives and sending them immediately forth to fight again in the same hostile ranks. We are aware that we touch upon delicate ground when we hint that such conduct had its origin rather in the policy and the mercenary spirit than in the chivalry and the

"Gran bontà de' cavalieri antichi."

Since the invasion of Italy by Charles VIII., warfare had, however, been no child's amusement: cannon had made its voice heard above the clatter of steel armour; and the barbarous wholesale murders in cold blood with which the French had often sullied their victories, had introduced an animosity, a fierceness, a barbarity unknown in the prece-

ding wars of Italy, and which three centuries have scarcely eradicated from the minds of soldiers.

Isidora de' Massimi may, therefore, be pardoned if she exhibited some innate sensibility on parting, on such an occasion as the present, from one whom she loved—as young hearts love for the first time.

We have already described the rehearsed separation of Bernardo and Osmanna. Their real leave-taking was even more affecting; and Bernardo was never so much surprised as when he owned to himself that he really had a heart. The discovery was deeply wounding to his self-esteem.

But while that worthy follower was winding up the no-doubt interesting scene which had given him this insight into his own character, Alfonso had torn himself from the noble-minded girl he loved, and had hastened from the room as one fearful of the stability of his own resolution. In the hall, however, he

encountered the old female servant whom we have mentioned, and who had, unperceived, left the stool on which she constantly sat, in a corner of her young mistress' room, bending over a basket of worsted and a large piece of knitting. During all their interviews, this silent, but observant, old lady had been present with the pertinacity of continental duennas: and the unwonted sound of her voice when she now pressed up to the Count, startled him as much as would have done an appeal from any other hitherto speechless image.

"Excuse, Signor Conte," she said in a half whisper, laying one hand upon his arm and the finger of the other upon her withered lip while she curtsied low—"Excuse, Signor Conte, that I stay you: but I have a word to speak to your Eccellenza in secret."

"Speak, my good woman; but quickly," answered the youth in a peevish tone.

"I will, I will, by the help of the Blessed Virgin. I have loved the Signorina, Signor

Conte, ever since the beautiful child was born : aye, Signor Conte, and I loved and was trusted by her mother before her. Now, Signore, it has not been difficult for me to foresee, ever since your Eccellenza came into this house, what would be the upshot of the matter : and I bless the Madonna for it, for ye are a beautiful couple and I pray that ye may have years of happiness on earth and then happiness in heaven."

"Thank thee, thank thee, good Francesa," said the Count, moving on with a feeling of delicacy or shyness.

"Pardon, Signor Conte," said the old nurse interrupting him ; "but I have not yet got to what I had to say. I say that I bless the Madonna that you and the dear Signorina will wed, because she is lonely now, poor child, and because the marriage will be very suitable to you both. For you know, Signor Alfonso, that although her father was reduced to act as a steward to a few noble families, yet he was himself descended from a good stock ;

there is no purer blood than that which flows in the veins of the Signorina Isidora. And now you will recover your estates; and she has plenty of money also"—

"I value not her money, good *Francesca*," said the Count once more impatient to be gone.

"Nay, nay, but ye cannot do without money, my dear young *Signore*: and the more money ye have, the fewer causes of disagreement will there be between ye. But it was of that money that I wished to speak to your *Eccellenza*," continued the old *duenna* lowering her tones and then adding in the softest whisper, "I do not like your servant, *Bernardo*."

"I have no reason to distrust him," said *Procida*.

"Perhaps not, *Eccellenza*; but I have; and for the sake of the dear child whom you love, aye and who loves you too," she added, while *Alfonso's* eyes sparkled, "for her sake you must attend to what I am going to say,

and never give a hint of it to that Bernardo: he is with poor Osmanna now:—a foolish good-hearted wench who will not be advised! Well, Signor Conte, excuse me that I speak in a whisper: but the good Consalvo—heaven only knows who he is, or why he has given up so much of his precious care to my child—but before her father died, he brought here some cases of gold ducats and gave them to him, and placed them in a secret recess which, of course, all we of the household know of. Now it seems that your Bernardo heard the holy man speak of this money to you: and he has been trying to coax Osmanna to tell him where it is hid. But hark! he comes”—she said interrupting her speech and listening anxiously.

“No, no;” she continued to whisper after a moment’s pause; “it is only that simple Osmanna sobbing because he is to follow your Eccellenza to the fleet. Now I doubt me that he will work upon her to tell him where all

the money is hid, if she have not told him already ; and, as I said before, I do not like him, Signore."

"What can be done?" asked Alfonso while some of his banished doubts occurred to his mind.

"That is it, Signor Alfonso," answered Francesca slyly. "Look you here," she said pulling him by the sleeve towards a window which, like those of the bed-room above, looked out upon the President's garden. "When you and he are absent to-morrow, I and Giuseppe, who is a faithful lad, will, unknown to Osmanna, drop the chests, with whatever they contain, into a cistern at the bottom of the palm tree in that little court below. It is always full of water, because it is supplied by the drainings from the president's fountain ; but as the water is not pure, it is never used, and the cover of the cistern is grown over with weeds."

"Do so, if you doubt Bernardo ; but why,

my good Francesca, need you tell me all this?"

"Santa Maria, because you and the Signorina will be one; and that you may know where to find the gold when all these troubles are over and when old Francesca is laid as low as it. But promise me, Signor Conte, that you will not let that Bernardo guess a word about it; for the sake of the dear child, to whom the holy padre Consalvo said it was to belong, promise me."

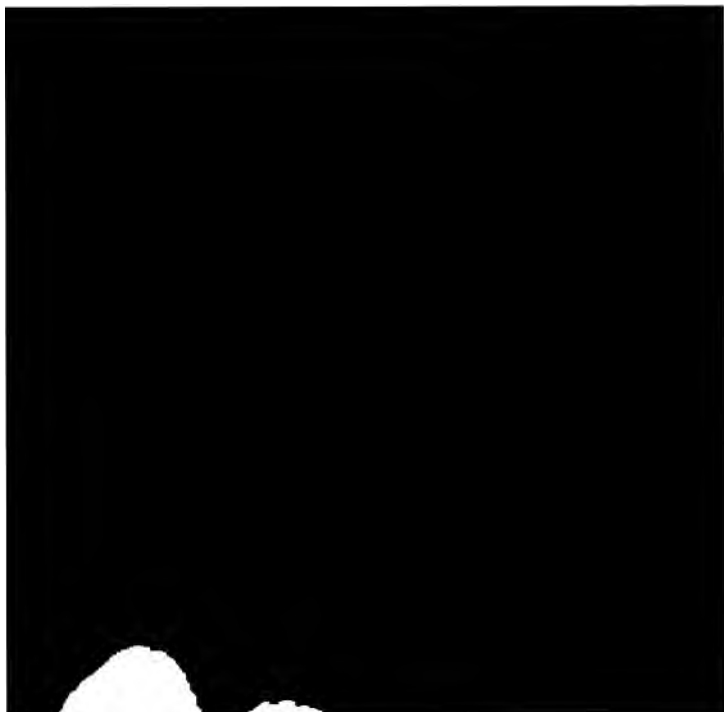
"Nay if thou wilt keep thine own secret, I will not betray it;" Alfonso replied to her earnest importunity. "And now, good Francesca," he added: "I must indeed go. Take care of dear Isidora and do not let her forget me while I am away."

"Why she could hardly do that in one day!" muttered the old woman to herself, as the Count hastened from the house. "A kind-spoken youth he is, though; and an orphan child needs a protector in these troubled times."

So muttering, she hobbled back to her mistress's chamber, and knelt down on the floor beside the little prie-Dieu from which that mistress was offering up the fervent aspirations of her pure infantine heart. We need not ask for whom those prayers were breathed.

CHAPTER XIII.

A SEA FIGHT, THREE HUNDRED YEARS AGO.



reached, at length, the Admiral's galley on which Don Hugo of Moncada had already embarked. Faithful to his promise to renounce all command and even to join in the expected engagement in the ranks of the private soldiers, the Viceroy had discarded the armour which he usually wore and was now disguised in something of the equipment of the estradiot troopers who had been levied during these wars. A plain cuirass with sleeves of chain mail, an open sallad or head-piece, and in his hand one of the heavy iron hammers with which knights strove to break the steel plates of their opponents' armour—such was the modest equipment in which he purposed to testify his zeal and valour. It is needless to say how much this chivalrous renunciation of his station had raised him in the estimation of the surrounding troops. The Marquis del Vasto—the deputed commander for the day—passed not, indeed, unnoticed to his own galley: he wore a most

splendid suit of armour, the darkened ground of which was thickly covered with embossed arabesque tracery of pure and burnished gold, surmounted by a helmet inlaid with gold, and glittering as though it already reflected the brightest beams of noon-day, while it bore aloft, above his splendid person, a tuft of crimson ostrich feathers and a streamer of crimson satin which fluttered behind him in the morning breeze—the Marquis del Vasto thus splendidly arrayed, attracted indeed universal attention: but the enthusiastic cheers of the troops were granted to the Viceroy and to the chivalrous band of disguised gentlemen who sought equal honour at his side.

With much confusion, the little fleet weighed anchor and stood out in the bay. In those days, a naval education was not deemed in any way necessary, to qualify a knight to take the command of a fleet: still, both leaders and followers now felt that they were seeking out an engagement with one

who had peculiarly dedicated his talents to the sea, and who had made his fame and his ability to be respected throughout the world. The fleet of Andrea Doria was also known to be far superior to their own; and although they hoped to impose upon him by the multitude of boats which crowded round their six galleys and impeded their unwieldy movements, yet these barges could inspire no confidence in those who employed them. All, in fact, relied rather on their own veteran prowess, attested by many a victorious battle field, and in the artillery of the picked men who crowded their decks, than in the naval skill of their leaders or in the peculiar properties of their fleet.

Don Hugo of Moncada, whose present chivalrous conduct caused him to be regarded by all as the real leader of the expedition, saw, with dismay, the unwonted thoughtfulness of this army of brave soldiers afloat; and anxiously bethought him how to raise their spirits

to the pitch of victory. An unexpected auxiliary presented himself. As the fleet, steering between the point of Amalfi and Caprea, approached the latter island, Consalvo Berretta—decked in his usual flowing robe, in his lofty steel cap, and bearing on high his spreading cross—strode from out a cavern in the cliffs of the island. Advancing to a point of rock which jutted out into the sea, he majestically waved his arm and signed, with the uplifted cross, that the fleet should approach his standing place. The Spanish soldiers, who well knew the figure of the hermit and who regarded him with that holy awe which he had inspired into all the country people, had no sooner seen him than, casting themselves on their knees, they prayed for his blessing and his favourable prayers: and the steersmen gladly obeyed the Viceroy's orders and took up their stations around the projecting head-land.

“ Bless ye, my children ; may the Almighty

bless ye," exclaimed Consalvo, waving his heavy cross in the air and seeming to embrace the whole fleet in its mazy evolutions. "And by my mouth," he continued, "by my unworthy lips he does bless ye and bid ye go forth and conquer. Who can doubt that success will crown your arms? Who can doubt it, who looks to the leaders and to the cause? Ye, the soldiers of him who is the hereditary champion of the faith—of him whose predecessors have liberated your noble country from the defilement of the Mahometans, ye go forth to contend with the allies of the infidels. Remember that if the false Turk does not himself oppose ye, remember that the galleys of Genoa are allied with France and that the recreant monarch of France has often planted the crescent beside the cross, has often disgraced Christian knighthood by an union unholy and forbidden. But wherefore, my children," continued the Recluse, "wherefore need I reason with ye upon the matter? I

have a stronger assurance on which to bid ye courageously go forth."

At this portion of the lengthened discourse, of which we have only given a few sentences, a messenger from del Vasto and from the Hunchback came over to Don Hugo's galley and earnestly urged him again to set sail, as they feared to lose the present favouring breeze.

"Nonsense!" exclaimed the Viceroy; "what have breezes to do with the efforts of brave men? The discourse of the holy hermit is of more importance than all the breezes that ever ruffled the Tagus."

"I have a stronger ground on which to reassure ye, my children," continued the Recluse. "Last night, it was discovered to me in my sleep that ye would this day deliver Naples from the attack of the besiegers. The glorious array now before me—was shewn to me last night in a vision: I saw all this valiant host pass before my humble cell and steer

into the gulf of Salerno where the trembling Genoese await ye. Anon the scene changed: no fleet arrayed for battle met my favoured gaze; but the bay of Naples was spread out before me: the sun shone bright upon its laughing waves: and innumerable skiffs, from all these happy islands and from the teeming shores of Pozzuoli, unfurled their white sails, and, although heavily laden with the choicest provisions which famished mortals could desire, bounded lightly over the waters and carried life and plenty to the starving troops and inhabitants who anxiously lined the quays. Therefore, again I say, go forth to conquer: go forth with the blessing of Consalvo whose prayers shall appeal for you in the hour of conflict."

With both hands he uplifted his cross as high as possible in the air; and, having waved it perpendicularly and horizontally over the fleet, turned him and slowly retreated to his cell amongst the rocks.*

* It is a fact that the expedition was thus delayed.

As though the battle were already won, shouts of triumph uprose from the enthusiastic soldiery. Musical instruments of every description then appropriated to swell military pomp, rent the air; and as the galleys heavily swung round the promontory of Amalfi, the glorious sun, just rising above the ruins of Pæstum, spangled the broad bay of Salerno with sheets of gold, and filled the heavens above with radiance and exhilaration. So changed was now the temper of the army that the sight of Doria's fleet, riding in that celebrated bay, drew a cheer of defiance and of joy from those who had so lately dreaded to encounter it.

A momentary hesitation seemed, in fact, to come over the conduct of the Genoese admiral. The sails of his galleys were suddenly backed, and the oars ceased their measured splash in the waters as the awkward tumbrils of the Spaniards rolled and lurched round the promontory of Amalfi. At

length, three of Doria's galleys were seen to detach themselves from the other five, and, with the utmost stretch of canvass and of oar, to make out to sea.

"They fly! They fly!" shouted the Spanish troopers; while the viceroy gave orders to his men to clap their spurs into their chargers—he meant to say to crowd sail—and make up to the enemy. The order was cheerfully obeyed, and a favouring breeze soon carried them across the calm waters of Salerno.

"Hold your fire till you see the whites of their eyes!" cried Don Ugo as his galley took the lead of all the others.

"I thought his noble excellency, the Viceroy, was to have been a poor knave like me, for the nonce," observed Bernardo sidling up to his patron; "but as they say that the dress does not make the monk, so, it seems, that it does not make the leader; for, by Allah, his Excellency's steel jerkin has given more

orders than the golden harness of the great Marquis."

"He who leads first to the enemy is always the best leader," answered Alfonso turning away to observe the progress of the moving scene.

"By heavens, but Doria has freed his Moorish captives from the oars and armed them!" exclaimed Don Ugo, turning to Ascanio Colonna and the Prince of Salerno who stood beside him disguised in the same poor armour as that he himself wore.

sent on shore for three hundred of de Lautrec's best marksmen. His decks were now swept; and although, for a moment, surprised by the vast flotilla of fishing boats brought out against him, he had, full soon taken all his measures. While Don Ugo delayed to open his fire, the experienced admiral was on the alert: there were no broadsides in those days, but he caused one immense cannon, called a basilisk, to be brought forwards on deck, and placed the engineer with match ready lighted beside it.

"Now, my brave fellows," cried Don Ugo, "now prepare your pieces, and when the galley rises on the top of the next wave, send them a token from the heroes of Pavia."

The lumbering vessel sank in the slight trough of this inland sea. Again it rose; and the cannoneers and the harquebusiers had levelled their pieces when Andrea Doria's great basilisk sputtered forth its contents. The smoke, which instantly enveloped Don Ugo's

galley, concealed not from those who manned it the effects of that discharge. The Viceroy himself lay wounded: forty of his chosen men bestrewed the deck with their corpses: and many knights and nobles were disabled. A shout of victory uprose from the vessel of the Genoese. Short space, however, had they for rejoicing. When the smoke blew off, the gallant Don Ugo was again seen upon his legs, and cheering on his men. A couple of cannon from his own galley were fired with effect on that of Doria; and while the rowers exerted themselves to close with the Genoese, the chosen marksmen made good use of their harquebusses, and those who were stationed in the roomy towers, which then surmounted every mast, cast down javelins, stones, boiling pitch, and arrows upon the deck of their adversaries with fatal effect.

Meanwhile two other galleys, following that of the Marquis del Vasto, attached themselves to two of the Genoese; and a spirited

fight commenced between the harquebusiers who crowded the different decks and those placed in the grated towers aloft. But it soon was evident that the Genoese were most at home in this species of encounter. Skulking behind pavises and availing themselves of every shelter which the construction of the vessels afforded—and of the existence of which the Spanish troopers were scarcely aware—they fired their own pieces with fatal effect while they received little damage from the hot-headed bravery of their opponents.

At this moment, however, while the result of the engagement was most uncertain, the three galleys which had appeared to fly at the commencement of the conflict, were seen bearing down upon del Vasto—their every sail set to a favouring wind, and their long banners or streamers, gorgeous with the united arms of the allies, fluttering from their mast heads and dipping their swallow-tails even in the very sea. The new comers soon opened

their fire from a heavier artillery than that carried by the other vessels, and attacked the Spaniards with a naval skill which they were ill able to resist. Half an hour sufficed to sink the vessel of the old hunchback : Fieramosca and many a knight went down : the admiral himself escaped by crossing over in a boat to that of del Vasto. A lucky shot from the great basilisk brought down the mast of Don Ugo's vessel with all those contained in its roomy tower : the cumbrous timbers fell over the side of the galley and

ship was immediately boarded by the Moorish prisoners to whom Doria had intrusted arms; and who rushed, dropped, and clambered upon its deck with the agility and the determination of corsairs long used to the work.

"It is useless to resist any longer, Signor Alfonso," exclaimed Bernardo. "You can do no good by slaying these poor fellows," he added, giving up his own sword while he muttered some words in Turkish to a tur-banned ruffian whose fellow the Count had just cut down. Alfonso could not blame the conduct of his follower, for the battle was evidently lost; and honour only could be achieved by further resistance. He joined himself, however, to Ascanio Colonna, the Prince of Salerno, and a few other knights who were bravely defending themselves step by step, as they retreated towards the fore-castle. Here again they made a stand; till the galley, drifting alongside that of the Marquis del Vasto, they leaped from its

sinking timbers and took refuge among the brave band which there still hopelessly contended.

Hopeless, indeed, was the engagement which was still maintained on board del Vasto's galley. The soldiers were almost slain to a man: the oars were broken or the rowers disabled: the vessel was on fire, and water poured into it on every side. Del Vasto himself was wounded; but still bravely resisted, until a galley which had been engaged near, and in which were Captain Schertel and the Germans, made its way out of the *melée* and sailed off towards Naples. The retreat of this vessel enabled another of the Genoese to close upon that of the Marquis; and he was speedily boarded on both sides at once. Vainly the gallant band of Spaniards placed themselves back to back. Struck down by numbers, the splendour of his armour alone saved the life of the unfortunate commander: for who, in those days, would slay a knight

whose armour testified to his ability to ransom his life and so to make the fortune of his captor? Del Vasto, therefore, was gently handled; and the usual butchery was commencing upon the few remaining troopers and the disguised gentlemen who had testified their prowess by following the example of the slain Viceroy, when the Marquis exclaimed, in the full tones of his manly voice—

“Hold! Hold! Ransom, I say! I, del Vasto, will be answerable for the ransom of every one of them.”

The work of death was arrested. The prisoners were removed to the galley of the Genoese admiral, while their own dismantled vessel went down behind them. Besides the German, one only galley escaped back to Naples; and its commander being accused of treachery, he, two days afterwards, sailed out and joined the squadron of the allies.

Their fleet destroyed; the bravest and noblest of their leaders, with their Viceroy

at their head, either slain or captured ; their city blockaded more closely than ever ; in what or in whom could the little army of veteran desperadoes enclosed within the walls of Naples hope or trust ?

In Philibert, Prince of Orange ; who having before, by the death of his superior officer, found himself at the head of the Imperial army in Italy, now also succeeded to the Viceroyalty of the kingdom of Naples.

CHAPTER XIV.

THE ESCAPE.

Merrily swim we, the moon shines bright.

SCOTT.

I saw him beat the surges under him,
And ride upon their backs; he trod the water
Whose enmity he flung aside, and breasted
The surge most swoln that met him : his bold head
'Bove the contentious waves he kept, and oar'd
Himself with his good arms in lusty stroke
To the shore, that o'er its wave-worn basis bow'd,
As stooping to relieve him : I not doubt
He came alive to land.

SHAKESPEAR.

THE sun had gone down behind the ridge of
Sorrento ; the short twilight of the south
had yielded to the charms of a summer night ;
and the moon now brightly rode above the

bay of Salerno. Not a breath of wind was stirring; and the galleys of Andrew Doria floated motionless upon the scene of their triumph. The sounds that proceeded from these victorious galleys harmonised ill with the calm scene around. Snatches of song and boisterous laughter; loud speech and disconnected notes drawn forth from trumpet, cymbal, or drum; cheers of victory upraised by the carousing crew of one vessel and chorused by the others moored along-side it—these formed a babel of sounds which no naval discipline, in those days, had power to arrest after such a victory as the wassailers had just achieved. Even the few prisoners who had survived the conflict were scarcely guarded; but sat dejected among their captors. Del Vasto had answered for their ransom; and the conquerors well knew their inability to escape or to give further trouble. The Turkish and Moorish slaves, whom Doria had unchained from the oars at the beginning

of the fight in which they had done such excellent service, still roamed at large on the vessels or collected in groups to talk over their own prospects: this indulgence might well be permitted to them for a time, in consideration of their good conduct in the morning: and they, also, were plentifully supplied with wine which no religious prohibition induced them to refuse.

But not equally thoughtless was every turbaned pirate; not equally dejected was every Christian captive. On the deck of Doria's own galley, coiled up in the shade of the great cannon, called the basilisk, which had done such execution in the morning, sat Bernardo Accorto and a half-naked Arab slave whom no passing spectator could have recognised as the gaily-attired Sinan who, at the head of his valiant crew of pirates, had overpowered and then released Alfonso of Procida and his fellow-travellers on the beach at Ostia.

"But I knew thee, at once, Sinan," said

Bernardo to his friend. "I knew thee and gladly yielded me thy prisoner; for I saw that the battle was lost and wished to be in the hands of a friend."

"Of a friend, curse thee!" ejaculated Sinan. "No mighty cause have I to befriend thee. Hadst thou let me have mine own way at Ostia, this fine Count whom thou dost follow had been safe in the prisons of Tunis instead of cutting down my old boatswain at my side as he did this morning."

"Pshaw!" said Bernardo. "Other boatswains will be easily found; and my Count's time will come when he will be better worth the taking."

"Other boatswains will be found, will they?" retorted Sinan angrily. "I would like to know how I am to find them while chained to the oar of this cursed galley?"

"Aye; how camest thou in this sad plight?" asked his friend.

"How? why by the help of this infernal

basilisk here. I was doing a little business on mine own account and had collected a prime cargo of goods and some valuable prisoners at one of these little Italian towns which we had surprised, when I fell in with this Doria's galley; I heeded it not, knowing that my caravel could outsail him at any time: but while I tacked about for the pleasure of baffling the great Admiral—out comes a summons from the throat of this cannon, which reached further than ever bomb reached before, and mowed down my mast and rigging as the simoom cuts down a date-tree. Of course, we could then do nothing but lie by till his Eccellenza, as you Italians call one another, pleased to come up and put us in irons."

"And how long do you mean to wear them?" quietly asked Bernardo.

"How long?" growled the Corsair fiercely. "Who is ever likely to take them off, I wonder? All those of my brave fellows who were not drafted into another galley, were

slain in to-day's affair. How long, indeed! as if old Doria would set us free with thanks for our good services! The only marvel is that we have not been chained again to the bench before this!"

"Then there is no time to lose," said Bernardo. "Why lie grumbling here instead of arousing thee and acting like a man? Canst thou not swim?"

"Swim! aye, by Allah!" cried the Corsair starting to his feet.

Bernardo as quickly pulled him down again by the belt wound round his waist.

"Fool," he said: "dost think that Doria's men will stand by and admire thy style of skimming through the water? A harquebus can reach its mark as well as a basilisk."

Crouching again into the shade of the cannon, Bernardo reminded the too-eager pirate that the nearest point of the promontory of Amalfi was, at least, three-quarters of a mile distant.

"To be sure, friend Sinan," he said, "thou art not much encumbered with clothing; but I have made it a point to wear either a doublet, a tunic, or a buff jerkin and iron harness ever since I became acquainted with the dungeons of Tunis: and the latter of these equipments, which I have put on for this day's fight, are not exactly such as to help my strokes through the water:—for I promise thee that I have no intention of abiding thy return here. I too have matter in hand which calls me on shore; and I must make myself look as much like a ruffian as thou art in order to get there. I trust to heaven that the cave of Conti be still ours?"

"It was so, a fortnight ago," replied Sinan.

"There, then, we can refit; and thence come forth again in the character of good Christians."

While carrying on this dialogue, Bernardo had noiselessly begun to unbuckle the pieces of his iron armour; he then slipped off the

leather jacket and the more cumbrous parts of his dress, and bidding Sinan to follow him, crept along, in the shade of the basilisk, and out at the port-hole which was still open in the bulwarks of the galley ; and beyond which the mouth of the cannon as yet protruded.

“ Hist ! ” he said, “ let us lie here till these noisy fellows give their next cheer for their victory.”

That cheer was not long delayed. It seemed that word had been passed round the decks that an end should be put to the night's carousal. One tremendous chorus, at the sound of which the moon, which hung light and buoyant above, seemed to rock dizzily in the firmament, uprose from the crew of every vessel of the little fleet. Bernardo and his companion dropped into the glittering waves. None could hear, amid the surrounding hubbub, the slight splash which their fall occasioned : and as they manfully threw out their lusty limbs and made towards the neigh-

houring shore, it was scarcely possible to distinguish the two black shock heads, which alone rose upon the surface of the water, from the many spars and scattered pieces of wreck which thickly covered the sleeping bay of Salerno.

The peaks of the Fontanelle, of Camaldoli, and of the other heights in that most beautiful ridge of rocks which separates the Bay of Naples from that of Salerno, rose white and indistinct—blending in the milky haze which the lustrous radiance of the moon cast over all the sky :—for a blue horizon, be it remarked, exists not with a bright moon. Darker clefts and well wooded ravines indented the lower side of the mountain's ridge. The moonlight fell broad and white upon the square tower of the Nunnery of Airola: and when suddenly its deep-toned bell broke upon the midnight air and summoned the sisterhood from their first sleep to meet in the chapel and pray for the world beneath them, how

sweetly did those tones harmonise with the whole of that still and lovely scenery! A poet would have found it difficult, at that hour, to say where earth ceased and where heaven commenced; so calmly and so religiously did the one blend into the other.

Bernardo Accorto, and Sinan were, however, no poets, and marked no feature in the scene we have attempted to describe save the dark and beetling cliff which, hanging over the waters, attracted their anxious gaze as they gradually neared its shadowy base.

A small esplanade of smooth sand, surrounded by almost perpendicular rocks, extended, in a natural alcove, from the foot of the rock to the sea. The two swimmers, however, rested not their weary limbs on its inviting beach; but gliding near the steep face of the precipice which stretched out, at one side, beyond it, they swam through a scarcely perceptible fissure in the cliff, and were suddenly sheltered from the sight of the keenest

looker-on. Having once passed the entrance, the two fugitives found themselves in total darkness: but both seemed to be equally aware of the nature of the cavern they had sought, and, after two or three more lusty strokes, they glided out from the deep water and took footing on a shelving beach of smooth sand like that which floored the exterior alcove.

"All is right," exclaimed Sinan drawing a long breath as he grasped hold of the side of a small narrow boat moored to the edge of the cavern. He went a few paces in advance, and, after groping about for some minutes, struck a spark from a flint and ignited a pine-torch, which cast its ruddy, but cheering, flames through the surrounding darkness. A wide-spreading cavern was thus dimly exposed to view: some parts standing out in the broad glare of the torch-light, while others fell dark in irregular recesses, and remained in almost total obscurity. Passing on from the side at

which they had entered, and which was flooded through the cleft in the rock, Sinan led the way to a remote ramification where goods of many descriptions, arms, armour, bales of rich Indian and Venetian merchandise, were stowed away with some regularity:—casks of the pickled tunny fish of Sorento, hard biscuits, dried fruits, and many a flask of wine were there also to be seen.

“What disguise, what dress dost thou mean to honour for the nonce?” asked Bernardo as he selected for himself a trooper’s suit, much like that which he had worn in the preceding engagement. “For my part,” he added, “the character in which I have appeared of late is not yet worn out; I shall only don the white cross of the French instead of the red one of the Imperialists until I get within the walls of Naples.”

“And what then?” answered Sinan, the while he cast over his own person the scanty dress proper to the character of a Neapolitan

fisherman. "And what then? In what are all these fine schemes of thine to end? Thy Count is safe from our clutches for the present; and I see not that we are one whit nearer the accomplishment of our real object. This Donna Giulia is as hard to be met with as ever."

"Cospetto!" cried Bernardo; "how little thou knowest of the matter! Why Donna Giulia is even now living without suspicion but one mile from this place."

"Allah ackbar!" exclaimed Sinan: but then smiting his forehead as he cast over it a Neapolitan cap of bright scarlet cloth, he added, "what can the goodness of Allah now avail me, since my beautiful caravel, since my swift gazelle, has fallen into the hands of that cursed Doria! Without a vessel, without a crew, without companions, how can I fulfil the orders of the Pacha!"

"Patience man, patience," said Bernardo. "Hast thou not gold in store yonder?" he

asked, pointing to a darker recess of the cavern.

Sinan nodded assent, while he lighted a capacious pipe and insinuated its amber into the folds of his black beard, where, perhaps, a mouth lay hid.

"Then with a store of gold," continued the Italian, replying to the gesture of the other, "companions, crew, and vessel may easily be found. Meanwhile, I myself will put things in train for thee. I have one or two matters in hand in Naples which will greatly aid mine own private objects as well as the public good. There is a foolish wench also"—

"Bah!" interposed Sinan through the clouds from his pipe.

"True, I agree with thy adopted Turkish scorn, and thought myself a true Mussulman in the matter until of late," said Bernardo. "She, however is not the only one. There is her mistress who, to my mind, would answer the great Pacha's sublime purpose as well as

Donna Giulia : a more beautiful woman never breathed, to my taste :—whether she might suit that of the magnificent Soleyman, the Pacha knows best. However, friend Sinan ; I think that I can decoy her and Donna Giulia together into thy hands : and then if she will not answer one purpose, she will another : she will be worth her own weight in gold ; for my Count of Procida will spend his last ducat to ransom her.”

Sinan slowly removed the pipe from his beard and blew out successive volumes of smoke from its matted tufts ; then rising from the ground, he grasped the hand of Bernardo in both of his and raised it reverently to the crown of his head.

“My master!” he said, “I acknowledge thee my master. Oh, Bernardo Accorto thou art a splendid villain ! Would that I had abilities equal to thine !”

“Thou dost smoke too much, friend Sinan answered Bernardo benignly. “It makes thee

drowsy. Thou art never wide-a-wake like me. Thou art so anxious to prove thyself a true Moslem, that thou hast exchanged the quickness of the Jew for the dulness of the Turks."

In such friendly conversation and in forming their plans for the future, a few flasks of wine were soon emptied and many of the choice provisions in the cavern were put in requisition. The two worthies then laid them down, and snatched a few hours' sound repose. At sunrise, they were again on foot; and, entering the boat, shot swiftly through the low-browed arch by which they had drifted into the cavern.

"I will row thee on as far as the plain of Sorento," said Sinan: "I am too well disguised to be taken for ought save a Neapolitan fisherman."

"But the cave?" suggested Bernardo: "thou mayest be seen to re-enter it."

"Never fear; I will choose mine own time.

Besides," continued Sinan, "if any of the country people should chance to see a boat disappear amongst the rocks, they know their own interest too well to make any enquiries. They may shrewdly suspect something amiss : but they will take care not to clear up their suspicions. We never injure our near neighbours, though we often benefit them."

Amongst the orange groves of Sorento, Bernardo sprang on shore. The Turk cautiously paddled back to his hiding-place—keeping at a safe distance from the galleys of Doria, which now, more closely than ever, blockaded the port. His friend soon embarked in another fishing boat ; and, with his usual address, effected his entry into the besieged city.

CHAPTER XV.

THE CONDOTTIERE.

Time out of mind, the poets prate
Of love, and all its blisses state ;
Tell us its raptures o'er and o'er,

the Via Carbonara. All present hope of relief having vanished with the destruction of her naval armament, the Prince of Orange had immediately adopted rigorous measures to prolong the resistance of the town to the utmost. Crowds of useless and poor inhabitants were that day driven forth from the walls, in order that the scanty stock of provisions might suffice longer to the troops; and to them and to the remaining inhabitants, the daily consumption was rigorously limited:—allowing a more liberal share to the German soldiery, who could, with difficulty, be kept in any subordination.

Bernardo had hoped to have been the first who should detail to Isidora de' Massimi the disasters of the preceding day and the imprisonment of his master: he could have given his own colouring to the recital and have drawn his own advantage from it. As it was, he found that all had been learnt from the fugitives on the evening before: he had little

hopes of the success of a small scheme which he had concocted: still when the young lady rushed out of her room to meet him, and, with flushed cheeks and trembling lips, asked him for news of the fight, he resolved to risk the attempt.

"The Signor Alfonso, bella Signorina," he said, "is well. As well as a knight can be who is a close prisoner from all he holds dear and is detained for a ransom which he is unable to pay. The Genoese Admiral will not release him for less than three thousand ducats."

"Oh good Francesa, let him have them directly," exclaimed the poor girl to the old nurse: "let this good Bernardo return with them directly and procure his liberation ere worse happen."

"This good Bernardo has far other thoughts, dear lady," replied the old woman. "Remember that we have had sure information that the Admiral Doria refuses all ransom;

but means to detain the prisoners on account of some quarrel between him and the King of France. So, villain!" she continued turning to Bernardo, "your precious scheme has been defeated, as all such ever shall be while old Francesa lives."

"What scheme, good Francesa?" expostulated Bernardo, who saw, indeed, that he had arrived too late. "For the love of San Gennaro, do not poison the mind of the young lady against a poor man who only thought, during the fray, of warding off danger from his master! How could I tell that Admiral Doria had changed his mind about the ransom? I was too happy to escape soon after the fight in hopes of getting the Count's ransom; or, at all events, of protecting the Signorina from whatever dangers might offer."

The old duenna shook her head in an unsatisfied manner; while Isidora thanked Bernardo for his good intentions and told him

to go down and take up his quarters with Giuseppe.

“ Beautiful Osmanna !” exclaimed Bernardo entering the servants’ hall, and pressing against his steel cuirass the happy nut-brown face of the girl who ran to meet him ; “ beautiful Osmanna, thou art worthy of the love of a warrior ! Thus should those who have distinguished themselves, as I have been distinguished, be greeted on their return to the bower of their beloved !”

Fluctuating between the love of Osmanna and of himself, Bernardo spent a couple of days. He was not again admitted to the presence of Isidora ; and the old man servant, Giuseppe, evidently saw him with no favourable eye ; and watched with suspicion his motions about the house and his intercourse with the simple wench whose heart he had won : still he found time assiduously, although apparently without design, to question Osmanna respecting the gold to which he

had heard the Recluse allude, and which he still believed to be in the house. Strenuously did the poor girl labour to evade his enquiries and to act truly by the family she served: but when could simple wench keep a secret from her swain? So was Osmanna, at length, wrought upon to admit that she had seen chests brought into the house by the holy Consalvo and placed in her late master's secret recess. Bernardo twined his bony fingers in her raven hair and coaxingly enquired the situation of the recess: it was described to him. He passed his arm round her olive neck, and asked whether they had since been removed: she was certain that they had not; because she had never left the house since her late return to it—and during the illness of her master and his wife no change could have been made—until the preceding day when Francesa had sent her to church for a couple of hours to pray for the success of the combatants. Bernardo kissed her full ripe cherry

lips and her large coal-black eyes, and bidding her not to weep, and telling her that she was a good lass, asked her when she would marry him.

"Oh not yet, Signor Bernardo; not till these troubles be over; and the dear Signorina be also married," she modestly replied.

Bernardo arose and paced the room. "Do not go to sleep, Bernardo, like other men," thought he to himself. "Thou art losing time here. Thou hast learned all that can be known, and thou canst not alone secure this money. Thou must e'en make the most of it thou canst. Join partnership with one who has more power; and make the best bargain thou canst."

On the following morning, the thrifty follower of the Count of Procida stood in the hall of the Convent of the Certosini which, with the adjoining castle of St. Elmo, crowns the hill of San Martino. Reader, hast thou ever gazed down from that most glorious ele-

vation? If thou hast not, would that we could describe it to thee! If thou hast, would that we could recall it to thee! Different, however, and yet the same was the prospect which lay expanded beneath those airy balconies which, jutting out from the walls of the lofty building, overhung the precipitous rocks on which that building itself was raised, and appeared, at every instant, about to fall into the distant abyss below. The smiling bay, the shores of Posilipo and of Sorento, the happy islands of Caprea, Procida, and Ischia, then, as now, lay in gorgeous beauty beneath: Vesuvius and the towering ridge of the Appennine, then, as now, reflected the tints of the glorious sun: the wooded hill of Capodimonte and the rich plain beyond, then, as now, teemed with verdure and fertility: the distant promontories of Misenus and of Cuma and the Phlegrean fields, then, as now, basked in the memories of the past and smiled amid their own desolation: aye, and then too, as now,

uprose from the crowded city beneath, whose widest streets were scarcely visible from the towering height, the indistinct hum of busy multitudes, the buzz and the blended murmur of life and strife.

And what private, what individual hopes, griefs and passions did not then swell that indistinct and confused murmur! There were the loud vociferations which characterise the most friendly intercourse of the true Neapolitan; there were the cries of despairing wretches smitten by the plague, or the deep wailing of their desolate friends; there were the loud songs of the drunken burryers of the dead, and the harsh rumbling of the waggons heaped high with corpses; there were the imprecations of the tradesmen as the avaricious Spanish leader bore off his hard-earned gains; there were the shrieks of the wife or maid overcome by the brutal passions of the German or Swiss trooper: there too was the dull booming of the distant artillery of the besiegers,

and the clash of arms and the sharper report of the pieces employed by those scarcely perceptible pigmies skirmishing in that distant suburb. Every degrading passion, every hateful crime, added its own peculiar voice to swell that spreading buzz: nature alone was calm, serene and gladsome as the hearts which own its influence and aspire to nature's God.

Different far were the musings of Bernardo Accorto while tarrying in this splendid observatory which, to other minds, would seem to be the first resting-place between earth and heaven:—the first resting-place whence the soul might look back, with momentary sorrow, on that which had so long detained it, and then flap its pinions anew and spring into the bright ether above. We will not tarry to say what were the selfish musings of the traitor: whatever they were, they were soon interrupted by one whom we have before seen more than once:—by Sebastian Schertel.

“ You must speak your errand quickly,

friend," said the German Captain on entering the hall. "The fellows who are laying out this new citadel require my constant superintendence."

"Just as the dissatisfied Neapolitans will require the constant superintendence of the citadel,"* remarked Bernardo. "However, Signor Sebastiano, although you are now all-powerful in Naples, yet, as I told you when we made our little bargain about the jewel, I can be of service to you."

"And to thyself, ha? But tell thy tale, good fellow," said the German.

"That is not so easily done," answered Bernardo. "However, to cut the matter short, I may say that I know a house below yonder in which immense wealth is concealed; but which I alone am not strong enough to turn to account. Now, as I said before, your Eccellenza is all powerful in Naples; and can

* The Castel Sant' Elmo was raised at this time; but it is of little use further than as overawing the city of Naples.

easily get up a tumult amongst your German followers, during which the house may be broken into and the riches secured."

"And the conditions?" asked Schertel.

"That no one in the house be personally molested,—unless indeed the knaves like, by accident, to cut the throats of an old serving man and duenna—and that I share in the spoils equally with your Eccellenza."

"Equally? Sapperment, thou art extortionate! However, who be these inmates for whom thou carest so tenderly?"

"Women: a lady and her domestics. But the Signorina is very beautiful, and is bespoken for other purposes."

"Very beautiful, is she?" said the Captain: "I like thy plan; and foresee no great difficulty in its execution. Yet will I have a look first at thy bespoken Signorina and make myself acquainted with the premises. Thou shalt lead me thither at the time of the Angelus this afternoon."

"Under favour, Signor Capitano," said Bernardo, "I had rather not be known as your accomplice. I have scarcely character enough for both of us. I will point out the house to you and await your visit. But what security have I for the equal partition of the gold after you shall have secured it?"

"My word, misbelieving papist! I swear it by the beard of Luther!" answered the German.

"The knowledge that Bernardo Accorto is as powerful for evil as for good, will be the surer pledge, even did your Eccellenza swear by the honour of Luther's wife," replied Bernardo with self-confidence.

The bells from the many churches of Naples were calling upon all to remember, for some few moments, the great mystery of the atonement through which they all professed to hope, when the bulky figure of Captain Schertel, clad in the principal pieces of a splendid fluted armour, but without the de-

fences for the arms and legs which made that armour so cumbersome—slowly advanced along the Via Carbonara. He rode a heavy sorrel war-horse, well able to carry his tall and massive person. Behind him, rode his own body squire; a strong but active man, whom no heavy armour impeded from assisting his patron when he should be unhorsed or thrown out in the fight. A couple of troopers, cased in iron from head to heel, rode behind the squire: one of them carried the heavy lance of the knight; the other bore aloft his swallow-tail pennon of sable silk charged with stars of gold. The cavalcade stopped before the house of Isidora de' Masimi; and the knight was, with every appearance of surprise and alarm, ushered by Giuseppe and Bernardo into the presence of the fair girl in whom we are interested.

Bold, self-confident, and presuming was the step of the *condottiere* as he entered the room in which Isidora sat; bashful, self-abased and

awkward became his manner so soon as his eyes rested on that exquisite figure and that peerless face as she rose up to greet him. The rascally purport of his visit instantly escaped from his confused mind: or if he remembered it, the recollection brought a feeling of shame which made him anxious to disguise it, not only from the fair object of his designs, but from his very self. For once in his life, he felt himself unworthy of the presence in which he stood: for once in his life, thoughts of younger and purer days, ere he knew violence, robbery, and murder, flitted across his mind. The vision was confused and fleeting as that of a midnight dream; but it sufficed to add to the embarrassment and self-humiliation which he felt. He offered no rare example of the effect of beauty, high-breeding, and angelical purity, upon men degraded by vice and base companionship.

“To what, Signor Cavalliere, do I owe the honour of this visit?” Isidora at length

asked, after waiting some minutes for the gallant knight to declare his business. She could say no more; for though she spoke with firmness, her knees shook under her, and her tongue clove to the roof of her mouth.

Still the German spoke not for a while: he played unconsciously with the velvet-covered handle of his dagger and stroked the pale yellow moustache on his upper lip. At length, however, with more shyness of manner than the young girl had herself evinced, he said, "I come to offer you my protection, noble lady. I had heard that you lived alone, and I would—I would protect you from the lawlessness of the troops."

"I am grateful for your kindness, Signore," replied the young girl with a degree of confidence inspired by the sudden bashfulness of the Captain, "I am grateful for your kindness; but I have no fears that any should attack a desolate orphan."

"Indeed, lady," Captain Schertel answered with the recklessness of one who had gradually become accustomed to the sound of his own voice under trying circumstances; "Indeed, I could not justify the risk to myself did I not press you to permit me to watch over your safety. There are evil-minded persons—"

"They will not molest one who heeds them not, Signor Cavalliere," answered Isidora: "I stir not from home; and I pray that I may be permitted to indulge my griefs unnoticed and unmolested."

Placing a kerchief to her eyes, she sank into a chair. The intruder was really moved by her distress; and with some show of sympathy, and a burst of renewed courage, turned him to the attendant and kindly enquired the cause of her sorrow. Francesa, who was as usual present, and to whom he addressed himself, mentioned the sudden death of her young mistress's parents; and, with the gar-

rulity of old age, allowed her discourse to run on until Schertel had fairly worked himself into a consecutive conversation with the old woman. In fact, his manners were so awkward, so submissive, so respectful, that the most delicate female could apprehend no evil intention: and the old duenna was not sorry to see one interest himself in her lady's affairs who might counterbalance what she believed to be the machinations of Bernardo. The natural sensitive delicacy of Isidora led her to feel annoyed by the devotion of the Captain, however earnest and humble: and it was with a feeling of vexation that she heard him declare that his body squire and his man-at-arms should take up their quarters in the arched gateway of the house and keep constant guard over all that it contained. His assertion "that no one in Naples would be so hardy as to molest that which the banner of Schertel protected," was but a faint consolation to one who feared no molestation save the

intrusion upon her privacy, her sorrows and her anxieties to which that protection exposed her. In vain, however, did she civilly decline the guard of honour. Captain Schertel took his leave of her with every appearance of devoted submission ; but left his two troopers stationed in the gateway below.

CHAPTER XVI.

BASHFULNESS.

He never told his love,
But let concealment, like a worm in the bud,
Feed on *his* damask cheek : *he* pined in thought ;
And with a green and yellow melancholy,
Sat like patience on a monument
Smiling at grief.

SHAKESPEAR.

DAY after day, Captain Schertel repeated his visits to the Via Carbonara ; and, day after day, he became more deeply enamoured of the fair Isidora de' Massimi. Not that he breathed his love in words : the very nature of the bold *condottiere* appeared to have

undergone a total change; and he who had never feared prince or prelate, and who had gained a renown as one the most audacious and extortionate of the German army, now trembled in the presence of a little girl of sixteen. Humbly and timidly would he sit before her in silent admiration; his little pale blue eyes cast down in the attitude of meditation on the sleeve of his doublet or the handle of his dagger, and only occasionally and furtively raised to the face of his new idol. Little conversation ever passed between

given way. Who could grasp at the monied treasure that was reported to be concealed in that house, who had found in it one deserving to be sought beyond all worldly price? Occasionally, indeed, the hitherto rapacious condottiere bethought him of the assurances of Bernardo; but the truth of those assurances could not be tested while he maintained the character of the protector which he was so anxious to establish in the household. Besides, he was not without hopes that his devoted attachment, his humble negation of self, might, in time, obtain its reward: he was not without hopes that the fair desolate girl would ultimately admit the suit of the dreaded, the powerful, the wealthy Sebastian Schertel. She herself evinced no predilection for any other suitor: no other men, he was assured by his followers, came near the dwelling: the old duenna evidently received the protection he afforded with pleasure; and Isidora herself often spoke to him with

interest; enquiring as to the progress of the siege; the movements of the distant armies and leaders; and the recent devastation of Rome, during which her visitor was currently reported to have amassed such immense wealth.

One morning, the Captain entered the saloon with an unusual air of self-confidence and resolution: his manner was even jaunty, and he appeared in no way ashamed of his awkward bearing or of his stolid ignorance. Isidora rose to greet him; but when she thought that he had, at length, wound up his courage so far as to be about to take her white, taper hand and raise it to his lips, according to the usual habits of the country, he suddenly paused, hesitated, a blush of bashfulness overspread his ruddy features, and he slunk into his accustomed seat, with his accustomed shyness. Overcome by the splendour of frankness, beauty, and innocence, by 'the might, the majesty of loveliness,' one half

hour elapsed ere he could summon courage to allude to that which had made his entrance so unusually buoyant. At length, gazing intently upon his doublet, he attempted to make a courageous effort.

"I have been thinking, fair Signorina," he said; but a husky feeling arose in his throat, and he was obliged to pause. He coughed away the obstruction, and again began:—

"I have been thinking, fair Signorina, of a great favour that you might do me."

"A favour, Signor Schertel! Your great kindness to me entitles you to claim all my gratitude."

"If I dared to think so!" murmured the German half aloud. "It will be but a small matter to you, but—but I shall be very thankful if you will accept it."

"Accept what, Signor Cavalliere?" asked Isidora in an encouraging tone.

"A present which I have been hoping that

you would not refuse: in token of my respect."

From the folds of his doublet, where it passed over his palpitating heart, the huge German drew forth a splendid jewel and tendered it, with his broad trembling fist, to the surprised lady.

"It is very beautiful!" she exclaimed, taking the heavy chain in her hand.

"It is indeed of beautiful eastern workmanship," answered Schertel with greater courage, now that he had unburdened his mind of the purpose with which it was overcharged. "Pray accept it, and wear it as a girdle. I have thought that it would go twice round."

He rose with the evident intention of passing it round that slender waist: but his courage failed him and he stammered forth,

"Francesa, good Francesca, twine it round the Signorina's waist, and persuade her to wear it ever there."

We have before said that the Duenna, for

many reasons, saw with pleasure the impression which her young mistress produced upon the stalwart German: his presence was a protection, and his followers baffled, as she thought, the designs of Bernardo: the deep respect of the bashful lover made her calculate that the siege of the city, however much it might be protracted, would be at an end long before he should have taken courage to annoy her, even by a declaration of his suit. She now, therefore, came forward willingly, and exclaimed, in tones of great admiration,

"Surely, Eccellenza, she will wear it in token of her thankfulness for your protection. A beautiful trinket it is!" she cried, laying the heavy flat gold chain, set with emeralds of unfathomable green, around the waist of her mistress. "But it will not go twice round, Eccellenza," she said: "it fits beautifully so, and this large clasp looks as though it were made on purpose to ornament a lady's bust. But, Santa Maria!" she exclaimed, "here be

some figures upon it. I hope they be no wicked charms."

"No spell could hurt the Lady Isidora," said the Captain, "even were such the import of the figures, which I do not believe. It is, in truth, a Turkish jewel, which was taken from the Infidels and which is now, at last, sanctified."

He blushed at the excess of his daring in thus hinting at his admiration, and turned aside in confusion; while Isidora and her

girt in. "But, lady, you have promised that you would oblige me."

"And she will do so, Eccellenza," said Francesa: "she will do so," repeated the old woman with the energy of one unaccustomed to see ornaments of such price; and who was fearful of losing a present to the intrinsic value of which she looked, rather than to the sentiments which prompted the gift. Captain Schertel departed, leaving his offering where the old nurse had so officiously placed it; and doubting, as every other beholder must have done, whether that graceful form or the splendid jewel most set off the other.

Bernardo Accorto soon heard of the gallantry of his new patron; and one glimpse which he caught of the chain was enough to assure him that it was the one which had passed from the Count of Procida by his means. This indeed imported not to him; as he had avowed to his master having sold it, and it mattered not who had been the pur-

chaser. But the Captain's encreasing admiration of Isidora, which was testified by the bestowal of so valuable a gift, proved to Bernardo that he had overreached himself in his scheme for obtaining the secret treasures of the orphan. So far from fulfilling his compact and dividing with him the spoils, here was the auxiliary, whom he had called in, adding to the wealth of the intended victim, and avowing himself to be her devoted servant, admirer and protector. "No woman," said Bernardo to himself, "can withstand such presents and such assiduity: the traitor will wed her ere long, and obtain the whole of the treasures for himself. A good plot, in sooth, Master Schertel, if thou hadst not to do with Bernardo Accorto! But let me see—let me see: and it will be strange if I cannot thwart thy precious schemes. While I am idling here," he continued to argue with himself, "no one purpose that I have most at heart is advancing. I gain nothing for myself; Bar-

barossa's schemes are at a stand-still; and when the Count is released, which he must be sooner or later, he will find his mistress wed to another, and I shall find that, over the wealth of that other, I have no power. Let me see—let me see: this Signorina must be got out of the clutches of the German:—she and Donna Giulia out to be brought together:—the gold—aye, she will leave the gold behind her—and I shall have a better chance of getting hold of it. So be it—so be it. But how to do all this? Let me see:—let me see—the old Iettatore:—gain his confidence:—tell him what is going on here:—prove my faith to the Count:—my honesty—ha! ha! ha!”

He turned from the little court-yard in which these musings had taken place and re-entered the house. The first object that caught his eye, as he turned into the passage, was the stout form of the Captain's body squire flinging his arm round the neck of Osmanna whom

he chanced to meet in the passage. The girl evidently objected to his familiarity, for she nimbly dived under the arm and escaped into the hall.

“Ten thousand devils, as these Germans say!” muttered Bernardo to himself “so this is the sport that is going forward, is it? Even my Osmanna is to be cajoled away from me:—the only being, besides myself, that I have ever loved! My curses upon the stolid brute! that he should dare to pass his arm

its point were already groping about in thy entrails ! However, Bernardo Accorto bears thee in mind ! And now for the old Iettatore !”

CHAPTER XVII.

THE IETTATORE.

Oh quanti sono incantatrici, oh quanti

superstitious fears ; and his heart was proud within him as he rowed out from the besieged city. He smiled, with intense self-satisfaction, as the motion of the boat induced a calm, meditative mood, in which he reflected on his own cleverness and on the stolidity of other men. All the pride of a rider who controls a plunging and restive steed ; all the pride of a pilot whose bark gallantly breasts the threatening storm ; all the pride of the falcon while it descends, in circling eddies, upon the devoted quarry ; all the pride of the commander who out-manceuvres his adversary on the field of battle—glowed in his own bosom while he thought on the hold which he had either already obtained or soon hoped to obtain over those whom the world looked up to, but whom he was resolved to bend to his own purposes. Forgetting that others were not arrayed against *him* as he was against them, he triumphed in the contest of mind against mind ; and scoffed at the dull, plodding,

honest natures whom he was subjecting to his sway. "Honest!" he said to himself, "pshaw! the more fools they! If they do not know that all life is a perpetual contest—that every man is, naturally, the friend of himself and the enemy of every other man, they ought to know it. And they do know it; why do they make laws and religions, except to secure themselves? Why does the priest tell you that, when you follow your own fancies rather than his, you commit a sin? Why does the law tell you that, when you overreach another man, you commit a crime? Why do they both tell you, when they see that you have a spirit above their dictation although you will not commit yourself by doing anything for which they can either hang you or damn you—why do they then both tell you that you are hurting yourself, that you are the slave of vice?—'Tis to protect themselves. Law—religion—morality, as they call it, what are they but bugbears to

frighten fools? And yet the very people who set them up, who strive, by their help, to defend themselves and what they possess, are astonished when any one breaks through their defences and seeks his own good at their cost! Fools, to suppose that I, and such as I, should slave for them when we have wit enough to conquer for ourselves! Oh it is, in sooth, pleasant to entangle them all by turns in our toils, and to see them obey our impulses while they think that they are commanding us! If ever I could condescend to a plodding—to what they call an honest life, there is one trade, and one only, which, methinks, I could select without degradation:—I would, I sometimes think, when I retire from active business, like to set up as the mover of the fantocini—as the master behind the scene who directs the wires that make all the policinelli act in the Piazza Castello. However," he resumed, after enjoying for some minutes the pleasure of the feeling of superior cunning,

“however, let us now have a pull at a wire which shall make this old Iettatore stalk out, with his cap and his cross, and obey the guiding hand of Bernardo Accorto.”

Exciting his courage by such reflections, he approached nearer the island of Caprea; but it was not without an incontrollable shudder, that he beheld Consalvo Berretta sitting on a rock at the entrance of his sea-washed cavern. The Recluse bore the same extraordinary garb, the same severe, and yet enthusiastic expression, which had procured for him the reverence of the Neapolitans and the opprobrious epithet of Iettatore from Bernardo Accorto. We have translated this epithet into that of evil eye; and yet we know not whether the one exactly conveys the meaning of the other. An iettatore, according to popular Neapolitan belief, is one who, either intentionally or unintentionally, exercises an adverse influence over all who come across him: so that he who meets an iettatore, how-

ever casually, is sure to be afflicted full-soon by some unexpected misfortune. This is the popular opinion, from which none dissent: and yet the minds of the timid are not so fully agreed as to who does or who does not exercise this malign influence. Some persons are believed by all to be iettatori; while others are only shunned as such by a few, whose private opinion they alarm. Persons of a repulsive cast of countenance are those most frequently supposed to be of the number of these foreboders of evil: but the same countenance is not equally repulsive to all; and hence one man dreads a physiognomy which others encounter without misgivings. Although the Neapolitans generally revered Consalvo as a saint, it was therefore perfectly competent to Bernardo Accorto to dread him as an iettatore.

Some even are endowed with the fatal gift of working evil secretly—their power unsuspected by others and even by themselves: and

it is well known that a late King of Naples was most fearful, lest, at any levée, some newly-presented and undivulged iettatore might cast his evil spell over his august Majesty. Is there no way, it will be asked, of destroying so fearful a power—of escaping so dire a calamity? Thanks to the self-preserving influence of popular superstition, a countercharm does exist! The horn of an ox, or anything in the shape thereof, is a sure preservative from the spell of an iettatore. And what traveller to Naples has not observed the splendidly-gilt horns of oxen or the tortoiseshell imitations thereof which decorate the mantle shelves of most Neapolitan sitting rooms, or are raised, on handsome pedestals, in each corner of the apartment? What traveller has not observed the little coral ornaments (cut into the same shape and mounted in gold that they may be suspended round the neck or to a watch chain) which adorn the shops of Neapolitan jewellers as

plentifully as wedding rings do the windows of the craft in England? * Some, perhaps, may have remarked that the revered and learned monarch to whom we have alluded, Ferdinand I., ever twirled such a little trinket between his fingers and thumb, during the presentations at his court, as a preservative against casual iettatori. Even the two first fingers of the hand may be extended in such a way, by those who are not otherwise provided, as greatly to avert the evil influence of any iettatore whom they may happen to encounter.

With the fingers of his left hand extended in this manner, and carrying a huge powder flask in the shape of a horn, slung over his shoulder—for the dangers of the times justi-

* We doubt whether this superstition be not derived from that which prompted Roman matrons of classical times to wear trinkets, of nearly the same shape, as a charm to produce pregnancy and, would the Gods so will it, male children. Hundreds of these little ornaments are to be seen in the Museo Borbonico at Naples.

fied the appearance even of an armed fisherman—Bernardo Accorto approached the cell of the Recluse.

“How now, sirrah!” exclaimed Consalvo, seeing him draw near. “I thought that prudence would have taught even thy impudence to avoid the presence of one who knows thee.”

“Your blessing, holy padre, give me your blessing,” cried Bernardo, falling on his knees: while he rigidly extended the fingers

approach and say thine errand ; and whether thou deservest them or not, the prayers of Consalvo shall be offered for thee. Thy master is Doria's prisoner ; but he will soon be free, to reward or to chastise."

"The more need that I should gain the good word of this old conjurer!" muttered Bernardo to himself as he picked his way amongst the rocks and approached that on which the hermit sat. "I know, holy padre," he said aloud, "I know your intentions towards the Count of Procida and the interest you take in the Signorina do' Massimi."

"Thou!" exclaimed Consalvo.

"I mean," continued Bernardo starting and nervously grasping his powder horn, which, shaking with the trembling of his hand, clattered and rattled against his iron corslet, "I mean that I know that your reverence joined their hands together and gave them permission to wed. As if," he continued to think to himself, "as if that was

not a sure way of keeping them apart!—why was Don Ugo's fleet destroyed, I wonder, except that it met this cursed Iettatore as it sailed out?"

"Go on, fellow," said the Recluse; "and leave thy powder flask alone."

"No, by Allah," muttered Bernardo: "I'd as soon throw away my shield in battle! Pardon me, holy Consalvo," he continued; "but knowing your wishes respecting the young people, I thought it the duty of a

ing his tall cross firmly, shook it with an appearance of angry hesitation; as though, his former plans being baffled, he knew not on what to resolve. At length, he bent his proud forehead and rested it on the transverse arm of the cross in the attitude of deep meditation. Bernardo marked him with a glance and a bearing half sarcastic, half timid: and bending the fingers of one hand in the manner necessary to constitute them an effective charm against the evil eye, murmured in humble tones, "Might I be permitted to speak—"

"Speak, friend," said the Recluse.

"At the service of your reverence," answered Bernardo. "My dear master," he continued, "before he went to that unlucky fight—"

"That most fortunate naval engagement," interrupted Consalvo, scowling. "It will be the means of delivering Naples, as I foretold it would."

"Sicuro, sicuro ; that most fortunate engagement," repeated Bernardo hastily, and trembling in every limb: "before my dear master went into that most fortunate engagement, he told me that it was his intention, after it should be over, to carry the lady to his own house on the ridge of Amalfi which is now inhabited by his relation, the widow of Don Vespasian Colonna."

"By Donna Giulia of Gonzaga?" asked the Recluse.

"By that noble lady, your reverence; she has always befriended the Count of Procida; and we doubted not she would restore the estate to him so soon as he should be at liberty to claim it."

"A worthy lady and a beautiful," said the Recluse thoughtfully. He mused a moment longer in silence; then turned him and re-entered his cavern.

"Oimé!" said Bernardo to himself, "I wonder what he is going to do now! Dia-

mine, but I have been too venturesome in coming here! And yet it was the only way of setting matters right again, of punishing that ugly follower of Schertel and of my Osmanna: I marvel how the old fellow knows that the Count is to be set free again!—”

His meditations were interrupted by the return of Consalvo Berretta, who advanced, uplifting the heavy cross and thrusting a naked dagger, of unusual dimensions, into his leathern girdle. There was, at the moment, a look of wild energy in his unsteady eye which might well have startled a beholder who attributed not to him the evil power with which he was invested by the fears of Bernardo. Seeing, however, that he was watched, he made an effort of self-control, and instantly exchanged that threatening glance for one more suited to his religious character; and, without uttering a word, stalked on across the beach and entered

the boat which had borne Bernardo to the island.

“No time must be lost, no risk must be incurred,” he murmured to himself as the boat returned again over those pellucid waters. “It is plain that danger impends, although it be a false knave that proclaims it. And the villain thinks that he has over-persuaded Consalvo Berretta! Yet must I appear to believe in his conversion, that I may be able to fathom this new villany which he has on foot:—for that some new villany prompts all

will be hereafter stated, the closeness of the blockade was already much relaxed.

Isidora de' Massimi sat in her saloon attired with her usual elegance and with the air of one who expected a visitor. A white cambric frock of the very finest texture, wide enough to fall in graceful folds around her shapely limbs, but not, like those worn by ladies of the present day, wide enough to conceal all the deformities which must be supposed to lurk beneath—was gathered by a concealed white ribband just above—not half way down—her budding bosom: a large crimson-coloured veil or kerchief of open gauze, variegated by a silver thread which ran over it in a rich wavy pattern, fell from the back of her head and was gathered, in natural drapery, over the long loose sleeves through whose transparency her little rounded arms were seen like a ledge of white marble at the bottom of clear deep waters. Her dark brown hair was braided in front in what is

called the Madonna style which well suited her small regular features ; and was gathered, at the back of her head, in a mazy knot of smooth glistening plaits, from which the points of the plaits sprung out and fell, in graceful ringlets, nearly as low as that most beautiful curve in which her small head was set upon her erect and slender neck.

“But surely, dear Francesca,” she said, turning to her old nurse, “surely this veil is too gay for one who has suffered so sad a bereavement !”

"Oh, not to day, good Francesca. Indeed, it is too rich."

"Not to day! The very day of all others on which you ought to wear it. Think that it was only given you yesterday: and the good man will be mortified if he deems that you have cast it aside so soon."

She brought forth the jewel, and Isidora silently allowed her to pass it round her waist. How beautiful did her figure appear during this simple act, as she easily, naturally, and therefore gracefully, uplifted her elbows—those elbows which no straps bound down to her side with the rigidity of a manacled felon! Isidora's arms had a free and elastic motion of their own; and, while the old woman buckled the chain in front, she was absolutely able to raise them so high as to twine, round her little rosy-tipped finger, one of the glossy ringlets falling from the top of her head. Her figure had shot up naturally; and its untutored charms

had budded forth as gloriously as the blossoms and the fragrance of the white lily of the garden—so truly adduced as an example of unrivalled splendour.

“But after all, my dear Signorina, what do you say to this Capitano Schertel?” asked old Francesca. “He admires you very much.”

“The tiresome man!” ejaculated Isidora.

“Nay; but shall you not grow to like him? He is a powerful leader.”

‘Speak not so, Francesca: you know that

my heart is already given away.”

miserable country. Do you know, Signorina, that the 'squire below has told Osmanna that their great prophet, Lutero, has just married a nun. Only think how wicked for a sworn monk to marry a sworn nun!"

"It is impossible, Francesca. Thou believest all the silly stories that thou dost hear," answered her mistress.

"I should think so too, Signorina; only that all the new teachers begin by getting married. What a many wives the infidel Turks have! and people say that their prophet, also, set them the example. Santa Maria! if this Lutero does the same and allows the same license to his followers, that would, indeed, be a reason against marrying the Capitano Schertel! I will ask him about it when he comes."

"I prithee name not the word marriage to him in any way," answered Isidora hastily. "I marvel so much that he is not already arrived, that I begin to hope he may spare me this morning."

"Is that the truth, Isidora de' Massimi?" asked the Recluse, Consalvo, in a loud voice, and, with uplifted cross, he stalked into the room.

"Your blessing, holy father Consalvo!" exclaimed both the young lady and her duenna, falling on their knees at the same moment.

"Answer me first, Isidora," replied the hermit fixing his searching eye upon the features of the young girl: "answer me first

thy truthful and ingenuous heart. Now, however, there is no time to be lost," he continued speaking rapidly. "Thou must go forth instantly with me from the power of this plunderer. It is most fortunate that he is not now with thee. Throw on a wrapper over thy person and follow me without losing a moment."

"If you say this, holy padre, I will not stay to enquire further," said the confiding girl. "My cloak, Francesca. May she go with me, father?"

"Not so; she must remain and occupy the house. Now child cling to mine arm; and, in the name of heaven, let us go forth."

With his muscular left hand he seized her trembling arm; and bearing, in his right hand, the cross which he used as a walking staff, he went forth and rapidly descended the stairs.

As he entered the passage below, he was joined by Bernardo who, with his left arm

passed round the waist of Osmanna, dragged along the terrified and half reluctant girl.

"Nay, nay," was he saying in a soothing tone, "do not hang back, my Osmanna, or I shall think thou dost prefer the nasty white moustache of yonder 'squire to the love of thy Bernardo. I follow, holy father, I follow to support your reverence," he added as he pressed down his iron skull cap upon his brows and waved his dagger in his right hand.

"Hala, your reverence!" shouted the body

he turned him half round and shook his dagger, in menacing guise, at the trooper.

"Here, Karl! Karl!" shouted the latter to his fellow soldier; "treason; treason! The old monk and Bernardo are running away with the women. Come along, man, and let us head back the meddling knaves."

Both now rushed into the street together, and laid hands upon the fugitives. Captain Schertel himself also appeared slowly advancing on his war-horse. Perceiving the tumult, he clapped spurs into his charger and soon joined the group.

"What is your reverence about?" he angrily cried. "Desist instantly from insulting this Signorina."

"Avaunt!" cried the hermit; "she is in the hands of rightful authority; and she goes with me."

"No jugglery here!" exclaimed Schertel; "she is under my protection and shall not be forced away."

"Avaunt thee, again I say," cried the Hermit. "Take thy sacrilegious grasp from my frock; or, by the heavens above us,—"

Schertel however still kept his hold; when Consalvo shook him off by a sudden effort; and giving his cross into the two hands of the trembling Isidora, drew his long dagger and placed himself resolutely before her.

"*Tod und Teufel!*" cried Schertel, "what means this monkish jugglery? Here, Gustaf, cast me this old meddler into the gutter while I lead back the lady."

Gustaf, however, the squire to whom he spoke, was engaged, at the moment, in a struggle to recover Osmanna from the grasp of Bernardo. Several angry words had been there also exchanged, when Bernardo, hearing the last orders of the Captain, saw how vain it would be for him and the old Recluse to contend against three armed men. His decision was, therefore, instantly taken. Several of

the idle lazzeroni and fishermen, thrown out of employment by the blockade, had begun to collect around, and were murmuring at the rude outrage of the Germans, when, turning towards them, Bernardo exclaimed,

"Shame! Shame, friends! will you see a countryman and the venerable Consalvo murdered before your eyes?"

"Save the holy Consalvo! Save the holy hermit!" cried several of the encreasing mob, jostling tumultuously forwards, while others ran from the adjoining streets to the scene of action.

"Save him? aye but you must bestir yourselves to save him," exclaimed Bernardo. "Ho, Massaniello!" he continued, addressing a tall, stout, half-naked fisherman whom we have before seen at the church of Saint Januarius; "Ho, Massaniello! See how the German heretics are handling our women. Thou too hast a wife!"

"Arme! Arme! To arms! to arms!"

shouted the person he addressed rushing forwards and brandishing a long knife. "Comrades, have ye no insults to avenge? Massaniello once had a wife, but these robbers found her out. To arms! to arms, my friends!"

He made his way through the crowd as he spoke, and then rushed forwards at the head of hundreds who immediately obeyed his well-known voice. The three Germans, taken by surprise, turned to defend themselves: but

Bernardo lost not the moment of his promised

that, then," he cried again striking the dagger into him as he fell; "and that, and that, to teach thee not to meddle with the mistress of Bernardo Accorto. I saw thee, villain! And now get thee to hell to publish the vengeance of Bernardo. Osmanna!" he cried seizing the terrified girl with scarcely less fury. "Why dost thou weep, wench? For thy paramour?"

"No! no!" shrieked the girl, turning away her head.

"No, no," repeated Bernardo; "drink, then, his blood, I say: let his blood wash out whatever kisses he may have left upon those lips;" and as he spoke, he smeared the gory blade across her clenched and pallid lips. She fainted away on his breast.

"Now, Giovanni," he cried to one of the by-standers as he laid the insensible girl in his arms, "support the wench while I go to help the holy Recluse."

Consalvo, however, needed not further assistance. When Massaniello had rushed on

at the head of his mob, he had quietly taken back his cross from Isidora; and, grasping her with his disengaged hand, had awaited his deliverance. On had rushed the mob; and assailed Captain Schertel and his trooper on every side. The German's horse plunged and pawed with its fore feet to keep at bay the rabble. Massaniello passed behind, and clutching hold of the velvet trappings and the embroidered crupper, seized Schertel round the neck and thrust his long blade into his side at

score of blows. Supporting his charge in his arms, the recluse moved towards the Nolana gate of the city. He was soon overtaken by Bernardo, carrying the still fainting form of Osmanna, and by the popular hero, Massaniello.

"Whither would your reverence like to go?" enquired the latter: "having delivered you, we will protect you from all future assaults."

"I thank you, my friends," replied Consalvo. "I am about to leave your city for a while: nor do I fear to be again molested."

"To the porta Nolana! escort the holy father to the porta Nolana!" cried Massaniello* to his mob. All thronged around,

* Massaniello being considered in England and elsewhere as the personification of the spirit of Neapolitan fishermen and lazzeroni, his appearance at any period of the history of Naples were perhaps justifiable. Yet to guard ourselves from the animadversions of some idle critic who has no better way of employing his jaundiced hours than by searching through the annals of petty events, we will state that we are as well aware as are the listeners

before and behind the fugitives; and with many a cheer and many a prayer, pressed on to the gate. The military guard seeing the tumult, turned out fully armed: but a few words from Consalvo having explained to them that he was only anxious to leave the city, they quickly drew aside, fearful of exasperating still further an ungovernable population.

“Your blessing, holy Consalvo! give us your blessing!” cried a hundred voices, as

the four fugitives were about to pass through the gate.

The Recluse turned him to the mob, which was already on its knees before him, and said, "I will bless you, my children, if you will disperse quietly and return to your homes. I thank you for your help this day. If needless violence has been used, may God forgive the perpetrators of it. Farewell: receive the parting blessing of Consalvo; and his assurance that your distress will soon be at an end."

He raised his cross high in the air and waved it with his usual solemn gesticulations over the prostrate multitude. They soon sprang to their feet and gave a cheer such as Neapolitan lungs alone can pronounce. Consalvo Berretta and Isidora, followed by Bernardo and Osmanna, passed through the low-browed gateway of the city.

Arrived on the outside of the walls, the wide encampment of the besieging army of

the allies spread itself before the eyes of the fugitives. Between its outposts and the walls of the city, the Recluse had hoped to pass down to the sea-shore and there to rejoin his boat; but the recent tumult in the town and the mighty concluding cheer which had hailed his announcement that the siege was drawing to a close, had reached the ears of the French advanced posts; and every man was on the alert to mark what should next happen. No sooner, therefore, had Consalvo and his company entered upon the hollow way down which he had hoped to escape to the sea-shore than a party of light horsemen, sheltering themselves from the cannon on the walls behind the sinuosities of the ground, rode up and accosted them.

"How now!" exclaimed the handsomely dressed and handsomely mounted knight at their head, upon whose motions several officers attended. "How now? Here be a strange

company to have occasioned all the clatter we have just heard !”

“Have a heed, Monseigneur,” said an officer to the first speaker as he drew nigh to Isidora, —“these may be some of the plague patients sent out for special purposes.”

“To ensnare de Saluces, eh ?” replied the Marquis ; for such, indeed, was the speaker. “We will be wary,” he said : “and to save thy youth and inexperience from all danger, we make over to thee, de Vaudemont, the charge of examining the holy personage who is so well accompanied. Say, pretty one,” continued the Marquis addressing Isidora, “say, art thou also in a league to destroy us poor Frenchmen ? Art thou, also, one of the poor plague-struck wretches who have been sent out of Naples of late to infect our camp ? I hope not, in truth, for the sake of thine own sweet self.”

“My Lord Marquis of Saluces” interposed the Recluse with dignity, “this young lady is

nobly born and virtuous, as her own bearing and the companionship of the unworthy servant of God, Consalvo Berretta, may testify."

"In faith, no one who has the happiness of gazing upon her beautiful face can doubt it," replied the leader, gracefully raising the handsome plumed cap which he wore above his low iron head-piecc. "But I should grieve, young lady, to find you in this suspicious company, did not the fact oblige me to request you to

dangerous. As for that fellow yonder with the bloody-faced wench on his arm, he bears the red cross of the enemy on his jacket."

"But I am ready, on the instant, to change it for the bearings of your Signoria or of any one whom you may prefer" answered Bernardo boldly; "and as for the blood," he continued, "the girl never looked so lovely to my eyes as she does now:—a few kisses, my Osmanna," he whispered to her, "will clear away that and every other stain. Now, indeed, I know that thou art all mine own, Osmanna."

"Each one to his taste!" replied the Marquis gaily; "and, by the Santo Sindone of Turin, few will covet thee thine! Ride up hither, Pierre Bonvoisin," he called to an old grey-bearded weather-beaten squire, "ride up hither and set this young lady on thy saddle. We will not tire those pretty feet by a longer walk than they had intended;" he continued, addressing Isidora; while he dis-

mounted from his own charger and spread his velvet doublet over the saddle he destined for her use.

"In pity, Monseigneur, do not stay me and part me from my venerable protector! I am a desolate orphan," exclaimed the terrified Isidora joining her two palms in the act of supplication.

De Saluces took hold of those two little palms between his own mailed gauntlets and kindly said, "Fear nothing, Mademoiselle: the honour and gallantry of Frenchmen

Isidora gathered the cloak around her ; and closing the hood which had somewhat fallen back from her head, signed to the Recluse to draw near, and then prayed him not to leave her.

He placed himself at one side of the charger while the old dismounted trooper walked at the other : Bernardo and Osmanna followed. Thus escorted by the company of de Saluces, who often approached and said civil nothings to express his devotion and to tranquillise her fears, the whole party advanced towards the hill then covered by the encampment of de Lautrec. On the skirts of this rising ground, they stopped in the court of a substantial farm-house, which, as de Saluces informed his fair prisoner, was his own head quarters. He gallantly assisted her to dismount from her saddle ; and, introducing her into the house, prayed her to command himself and whatever else it contained so long as he should feel it his pleasing duty to detain her as a prisoner of war.

"Or of love? Which of the two is she to be?" de Vaudemont asked his leader as he rode off to his own quarters.

De Saluces shrugged his shoulders, and smiled with the gay and thoughtless expression of a handsome, a self-satisfied, an unprincipled man of pleasure.

ISIDORA

OR THE

ADVENTURES OF A NEAPOLITAN.

A NOVEL,

BY

THE OLD AUTHOR,

IN A NEW WALK:

AUTHOR OF "THE POPE AND THE COLONNAS."

&c. &c. &c.

"C'EST L'AMOUR, L'AMOUR, L'AMOUR
QUE FAIT LE MONDE À LA RONDE."

IN THREE VOLUMES.

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ISIDORA.

CHAPTER I.

ANDREW DORIA.

"He had engaged with the king for a certain time, and until that was expired, his principles would not permit any shadow of changing. Fortunately, his friends discovered, by computation, that there remained but a fortnight to elapse of the engagement he had formed, and to which, though certain it was never to be renewed, no power on earth could make him false. With some difficulty, they procured a reprieve for this short space, after which they found him perfectly willing to come under any engagement they chose to dictate."—SCOTT.

WE have said that the strictness of the blockade which had so severely afflicted the inhabitants of Naples had been, in a great degree, relaxed. In order to account for this,

our narrative must recede to a few days prior to that on which Bernardo Accorto had visited Consalvo on the island to inform him of the devoted attentions of Captain Schertel to Isidora. The victorious fleet had taken no notice of his boat; but had allowed to it, as to others, free access to the city.

The admiral of that fleet—or, perhaps we ought to say the owner of it, for it appears to have been his private property, which, with his own services, he had been long in the habit of letting out for hire to different

his left hand and smote with it his thigh or the narrow boundaries of the cabin as he approached them at each end of his walk: his voice both rose and fell to an unusual pitch. Surely he had received some unexpected good news, or was triumphing in the recital of some exploit of his younger days!

The Marquis del Vasto, Alfonso of Procida, and the Hunchback Giustiniano, his prisoners since the engagement of the first of June, sat around a table on which every variety of the rich wines of the Mediterranean shores glowed transparent in crystal, or steamed, fragrant with spices, from choicely wrought ewers and golden goblets; all the fruits of the early season were also there, with a profusion of the exquisite confectionary of Genoa. The three guests were silent. Del Vasto eyed his entertainer with a sidelong look which evidently carried to his own mind food for meditation, awakening schemes and sudden resolves: the Hunchback

openly stared at him, while a grin of irony and of broad delight disturbed his weather-beaten features: the Count of Procida, with the good manners of a gentleman uninitiated in diplomacy, appeared not to notice ought unusual in the bearing of his host.

A stranger officer, who had been standing aside addressing himself to Doria, at length left the room; when, after taking a few more hurried paces, the latter turned him to his guests exclaiming—

“Pardon me, Signori; pardon me that I was obliged to interrupt our cheer to receive this messenger from the *Sieur de Barbesieux*—from the Admiral Barbesieux, I should say—the King of France’s new admiral in the *Levant*. The envoy congratulates us on our victory and announces the Admiral’s speedy arrival with the French fleet in these waters. Good news this for his Italian allies who began to think themselves forgotten! I may not, however, ask you, gentlemen, to pledge

us in a cup of wine to the new admiral," he continued as he took a goblet from the table; "and therefore," he said as, after poisoning it a moment in his hand, he pushed it back on the board, "and, therefore, the toast shall e'en remain unproposed and undrunk."

"I thought," observed del Vasto in a studiously careless tone, "I thought that you yourself, my Lord, were to have been honoured with the title of the King of France's admiral."

"A mistake, dear Marquis, a mistake," exclaimed Doria quickly: "I declined the title when it was once offered to me."

"Once?" said del Vasto in a low tone of suppressed surprise. "Once? but surely the request was reiterated to one who had served the cause so ably for the last five years — as we poor Imperialists know to our cost;—to one who has even recently so gloriously distinguished himself?"

"Not so, friend, not so!" cried Doria in a

bantering tone. "What claim has a rough sailor to be asked twice to accept honours? Were it, indeed, a question of surrendering his prisoners—"

"Impossible!" exclaimed the Marquis: "Francis cannot surely call upon you to do so!"

"You know him not, Marquis del Vasto," replied the blunt sailor, yielding himself to the snare which the other was throwing out. "This is not the first time that I, Andrew

"Heard it in Spain, did you, Signor Conte?" exclaimed Doria angrily. "And so the tricks which have been played upon Andrew Doria have furnished amusement to the court of Spain, have they?"

He started again from the table as he spoke, and strode up and down the cabin striking the rolled map against his thigh with all the power of his muscular arm.

"Calm yourself, calm yourself, Monsignore," exclaimed the Marquis del Vasto in a soothing tone, as he rose from the board, and passing his arm within that of Doria, paced up and down beside him. "Calm yourself: a man like you should not be moved by the ingratitude of princes."

"Ingratitude!" cried Doria. "Ingratitude to me? Think not, Marquis, that I ever hoped or sought anything from them. In these stirring times, however poor had been his fortunes, Andrew Doria could have carved his way to principalities had he not

been withheld by other motives. Had not the love of his country detained him, Andrew Doria had now reigned over the wide new world which Christofero Columbo has discovered: aye, and had been received and welcomed there by his own blood and kindred," he added in a manner which showed an effort to recover his self-controul and which invited his companion to follow the direction of his discourse. This del Vasto could not but note; and therefore exclaimed

all heard the praises that have been lavished upon my noble countryman, Columbus;—yes, Signori, be it remembered that Columbus was a Genoese;—for his bold attempt to seek out a new road to the Indies: we all congratulate ourselves that we live in an age which has been illustrated by his discoveries and by his daring. But the daring thought arose not with him: although foreigners of every country — yourselves, probably, Signori, amongst the rest—believe him to have first conceived the idea, yet the Genoese, and especially the family of Doria, may arrogate to themselves redoubled honour from the very success that crowned his endeavours. Two hundred years before Christofero Columbus was born, two Genoese, Thedisio Doria and his companion Ugolino Vivaldi, fitted out two vessels for the noble purpose which this Columbus has accomplished; they also sailed into the great Western Ocean in search of this new road to the Indies. The

memory of their attempt has not been forgotten in Genoa; and from the traditions which it has left, this new navigator, Columbus, formed his first resolves which have led to such glorious success. But who shall say that my ancestor and his companion were not equally successful? They passed the straits of Gibraltar and sailed due west. They were never heard of more: but who shall say that they did not discover and people some of those wonderful lands?" *

* To the general reader, this statement will appear so startling that we must give our authority:—

"A questi viaggiatori Italiani," writes Tiraboschi, "io debbo per ultimo aggiungere un 'ardito benchè infelice tentativo fatto in questo secolo stesso per trovare la via maritima alle Indie Orientali che fu poi scoperto, due secoli dopo, dai Portoghesi. Di questo memorabil fatto, niuno ch'io sappia, ha parlato de' moderni scrittori de' Viaggi e delle navigazioni. Ne traviamo pero memoria nelle storie Genovesi del Foglietta il quale l' anno 1292 narra un tal fatto e nomina i due magnanimi capitani che a ciò si accinsero, cioè Theodisio Doria e Ugolino Vivaldi. *Tedisius Aurea et Ugolinus Vivaldus duabus triremibus privatim comparatis, et instructis. . . . aggressi sunt maritimam viam ad eum diem orbis ignotam ad Indiam patefaciendi, fretumque Herculeum egressi cursum in Occidentem direxerunt; quorum*

"That must have been about the time when the compass was first discovered in my little town of Amalfi," observed Alfonso of Procida.

"It was so," said the old Hunchback thoughtfully. "It is strange that one

hominum.....qui fuerint casus nulla ad nos fama pervenit. (*Hist. Genuens.* l. 5.) Il veder narrarsi una sì ardita impresa sol dal Foglietta, e tacciata nelle antiche chronache Genovesi mi avrebbe forse tenuto alquanto dubbioso e sospeso. Ma fortunatamente mi è riuscito di trovarne memoria presso uno scrittore contemporaneo; ed io debbo questa scoperta alla sofferenza che ho avuto di scorrer tutta l'opera di Pietro da Abano, intitolato il Conciliatore, per trarne quelle notizie storiche che mi avvenisse di rinvenirvi. Ei dunque parlando di quei paesi dice che circa trent'anni innanzi (egli scriveva al principio del secolo seguente) i Genovesi, apparecchiate e ben provvedute due galee, ardiron con esse di uscir dallo stretto di Gibilterra e ingolfarsi nel vasto oceano; ma che più non se n'avea avuta notizia alcuna; e quindi addita la strada terrestre che allor teneasi per andare alle Indie, cioè di entrare nelle Tartaria andando verso settentrione, e di piegar quindi a levante e a mezzogiorno. Ecco le parole di questo scrittore. Parum ante ista tempora Januenses duas paravere omnibus necessariis munitas galeas, qui per Gades Herculis in fine Hispaniæ situatas transiere. Quid autem illis contigerit, jam spatio fere trigesimo ignoratur anno. Transitus tamen nunc patens est per magnos Tartaros eundo versus equilonem deinde se in orientem et meridiem ongirando (*Conciliat. diss.* 67.) See Tiraboschi Stor.: del: Let.: Ital.: Li.: I. Sec. XV.

Genoese should accomplish what another Genoese had attempted two hundred years before."

"It is indeed a noble incident to be recorded in the history of your country," exclaimed the Marquis del Vasto: then with an abstracted air and as if speaking to himself, he added "Shame that the people of so noble a city should succumb to a trumpery place like Savona!"

"Succumb to Savona?" cried Doria

in the western world? My voice has been heard in the councils of the King of France. He dare not; for his crown, he dare not."

"As a naturalised Italian," answered the Marquis, "I trust that your Lordship may have sufficient influence to rescue so important a state as Genoa from the grasp of strangers. I had heard it reported, I trust falsely, that your appeal had been slighted."

"He dare not!" cried Doria pausing in the centre of the cabin and folding his arms across his breast with a look of calm determination.

"Dare not?" repeated del Vasto in a tone of doubt. "Permit," he added approaching close to the Admiral and speaking in a lower tone, "permit me to ask whether your demands for the arrears of money due to you have been attended to?"

"That is a secondary matter," answered Doria.

"Nay," replied the tempter; "but it serves

to show the weight attached to your reclamations at the court of France. Those against Sarona may be equally slighted.'

"Again I say, they dare not," reiterated Doria.

"For how long a period does your engagement with Francis and the allies last?" del Vasto asked with the explicitness of one who spoke of a matter of barter well understood and acknowledged in those times.

"Until the first of July," the Admiral

Still Doria paced the floor in silence.

"The Emperor," continued del Vasto, "the Emperor knows better how to reward those who serve him. Leave the allies at the expiration of your present engagement, and take service with the Emperor. I will answer for it that he will grant you your own terms for yourself and for your country."

Still Doria spoke not: and when the Marquis of Vasto was about to renew his suggestions with more assured hope, the door of the cabin opened and Consalvo Berretta, the recluse of Caprea, stood upon the threshold, in his usual attire, and steadily surveyed the group.

"So, impostor!" the Hunchback angrily exclaimed on seeing him: "so prophet, thou art come to receive the wages of thy false preachment from his Eccellenza of Doria and thy frock full of broken bones from us whom thou didst betray? Or art thou come to triumph over our defeat after thou hadst so falsely promised us a signal victory?"

it is a small matter to be reduced by thee and by other but for the honour of Him servant he is, Consalvo Ber willing to show that all either has or will come to pass

"Per Bacco!" cried G reverence will be more than can prove that we beat the cording to thy vision!"

"My vision foretold not as My vision foretold only that of that engagement, the block would be raised, her port plenty and triumph succeed distress. Thus far, and thus

built upon it, mine own weak reason is alone responsible. The vision only was from the Lord, and it is about to be accomplished."

"In faith, I see not how," exclaimed the Hunchback.

"The poverty of thy wit blinds thee," answered Consalvo. "The noble del Vasto, the noble Doria are differently moulded: they well and clearly discover that the vision is about to be fulfilled through the very disasters of that otherwise fatal engagement. Wherefore, noble Doria," he continued addressing himself to the Genoese admiral, "wherefore thinkest thou that the Lord delivered these prisoners into thy hands?—for the paltry crowns which their ransom might produce to thee? Not so, not so; but for far more important purposes: for a purpose on which the welfare of a kingdom, on which the dominion of the Emperor in Italy depends: 'twas that they might be near thee to add their influence to my words and with me to urge thee to quit

the service of a king who betrays thee and to join that of an Emperor who will fulfil thy every wish."

"Bravo, hermit!" cried Andrew Doria laughing. "Bravo! there is more in thee than I had believed!"

"Remember, my Lord," said del Vasto in the same tone, "remember that the voice of heaven speaks through the holy Consalvo! Surely you cannot now hesitate an instant in following the course which heaven itself points out?"

"But most certain," continued the hermit.
"I have means of information which are not
possessed by other men"—

"Declare them," interposed Doria.

"I will not: to do so would prevent my future
usefulness. My character is at stake, and I
declare to thee that what I have stated is a
fact: thy haughty reclamations, nay even
threats, respecting the improvements at
Savona have given thine enemies at the
French court a handle against thee."

"And enemies enough I have there," ex-
claimed Doria. "The base ungrateful fools!"
he cried as he again began to pace the room
with quick irregular steps which gradually
subsided into a slow, measured, meditative
walk. Del Vasto marked him anxiously: but
spoke not himself and signed to his com-
panions to remain also silent.

For a quarter of an hour or more, this me-
ditative walk continued; and the varying
impulses of the admiral's mind were displayed

in the varying measures of his uneven tread. At times, he threw his hands behind him and moved backwards and forwards with an even and accelerated pace: at times, he would pause suddenly, and folding his arms over his chest, gaze down upon the floor with a deep, hidden, and almost dull expression: then would he move on again for a few paces; and anon, leaning with his shoulder against the bulk-heads of the cabin, he would close his eyes and raise and depress the toe of his foot as if beating time to some unheard minstrelsy: at length he cast himself in a chair, and crossing his legs and gazing up to the low ceiling, seemed as immovably and as thoughtlessly fixed as the gilt figure-head of his galley. Suddenly he started up; and, taking del Vasto aside, he said in a voice which, though suppressed, was perfectly audible to all in the cabin:

“What terms, think you, Charles would give?”

"Your own," answered the Marquis.

"The freedom of Genoa?" asked Doria.

"Aye; or the establishment of a Dorean republic."

"The submission of Savona?"

"Readily. 'Twould save the cost of improvements to effect a needless rivalry."

"Pardon for all the past?"

"And praise for the future;" replied del Vasto.

"A salary of sixty thousand ducats a year?"

"Sixty?" exclaimed the Marquis in surprise.

"Not one thousand less!" asserted Doria; "I would manage to equip twelve galleys for his service. I had thirty-five thousand ducats from the Pope for eight galleys only; and Francis of France had engaged to pay me thirty-six thousand for the same force. These are stirring times; and I would like to be at the head of a numerous fleet. So that the money be forthcoming, I can easily collect ships and crews."

“Pshaw!” exclaimed the Recluse, joining in the discourse. “The Emperor will be but too glad to agree to all these propositions. The larger your fleet, the greater effects it will produce. Who would think of hiring an army, whether for land or sea, who did not believe that it would pay its own expenses? Send off an agent instantly to treat with the Emperor, and all will full soon be settled.”

“Aye, Eccellenza,” exclaimed the old Hunchback rising and moving forwards

and old Giustiniano will deem it the proudest

"Better send one of your own officers," exclaimed del Vasto; anxious to prevent a second appeal to the Emperor from him whose property he himself held.

This plan was instantly determined upon; and immediately, while the negociation was proceeding, the galleys of Doria stood out from Naples and took up their stations in the imperturbable waters of Puzzuoli. There they rode quietly at anchor: and many a loaded bark spread its white canvass to the breeze and bore into the port of Naples those supplies of fresh provisions of every description which the famished inhabitants of the city had so long vainly pined for.

"Praise be to the Lord who fulfils the vision which he had vouchsafed to his servant!" the Recluse exclaimed as he stood up in the boat which bore him back from Doria's retiring fleet to his island hermitage. He waved his cross on high and imprecated blessings upon the many little barques which,

heavily laden with provisions, dotted the blue waters of the bay with life and beauty. The tiny waves rippled in froth against the prow of his boat: and when its keel grated upon the beach of Ischia, he leaped on shore and instantly kneeling among the broken rocks with his cross between his hands, he thanked God for the success which had attended his mission to the hitherto blockading fleet.

The thought that Isidora de' Massimi was one of the numerous sufferers whom he had relieved added balm to his heart as he trod his way back to his island hermitage.

And here, a day or two afterwards, Bernardo Accorto had found him; as we have recounted at the beginning of our last



CHAPTER II.

THE FRENCH CAMP.

Ecco l'armata imperial si scioglie
 Per dar soccorso alla città assediata ;
 E ecco il Doria, che la via le toglie,
 E l' ha nel mar sommersa, arsa e spezzata.
 Ecco fortuna come cangia voglie,
 Sin qui a' Francesi si propizia stata,
 Che di febbre gli uccide, e non di lancia ;
 Si che di mille un non ne torna in Francia.

ARIOSTO.

THOUGH Andrew Doria would not actively
 wage against his old allies until his pro-
 posals should have been accepted by the
 Emperor, yet the withdrawal of his fleet from
 the blockade had immediately opened the
 communications between Naples and the sea

and relieved it from much of the distress which it had suffered. Isidora de' Massimi however had only escaped from one scene of wretchedness to another. Those disasters which had been already much relieved at the time of her flight from Naples, she now found encreasing around her in the French camp. The king of France, with his usual want of methodical perseverance, had neglected to send to his general those small supplies of men and money which would have secured to him the dominion of Italy: so that in proportion as the Imperial army within the city was now enabled to recruit its energies, the power of the French decreased: and instead of being the besieger, de Lautrec almost found himself besieged in his own camp. We have before hinted that the poor plague-struck wretches sent out of Naples for that purpose, had communicated the infection—contrary to all modern theory!—to the besieging army. This army began also to suffer from every

variety of sickness occasioned by the then marshy grounds on which it was principally quartered.

We have seen that our heroine—if we may give that title to a beautiful young girl who was too sweetly feminine to do anything heroic—we have seen that Isidora had fallen into the power of the gallant Marquis of Saluces—the independent sovereign of a little state lying between the mountains of Savoy and France, and which has been long since absorbed in the former country. His rank as a sovereign prince, gave him much influence in the army, which he might have improved still more had not his disposition led him to the court or to the tournament rather than to the serious exertions of the tented field. To the impulses of this disposition he had yielded when he had arrested Isidora and her escort, on a pretence which he well knew to be frivolous and unwarrantable; and the same motives now led him to detain her a

captive in his quarters, and to pass, at her feet, many of those hours which the exigencies of the army required should be far otherwise spent.

“Thanks to our Lady of Mercy!” he exclaimed, entering the little open-windowed parlour of the farm-house, which a vine, trained over spreading trellises, sheltered from the noon-day sun; “and thanks to the hope of an approving smile from those beautiful eyes, we have, in part, succeeded! We have saved the convoy of provisions, although

unwell, Monseigneur ! You look pale and tired."

"Would that I were always so, could it be the means of awakening such gentle sympathy in that little obdurate heart!" he said, as he raised his plumed helmet from his head and laid it on the stone floor beside him. He rested his finely formed length of limb on his elbow, and pressed the other hand on his white, nay, pallid brow, with the slowness of pain and languor. The hand, however, soon passed on to smooth down the curling auburn hair and the neatly trimmed beard of a darker hue which encircled his handsome and manly features.

"It will be nothing ;" he continued to say : "Let all the rest fall ill, an it so chance ; they have nought but the prospect of disgrace to keep them well : but de Saluces looks upon a prospect so fair, that dark, indeed, must be the cloud able to veil it from him !"

"Nought to expect but disgrace, Mon-

seigneur?" asked Isidora wishing to turn the Marquis's usual complimentary talk into another channel.

"Nought else, fair lady ; for they cannot even boast of having captured thee, who art the prize of de Saluces' own lance. This mighty army which conquered all the north of Italy ; which delivered the Pope by the mere terror of its approach ; which won easy possession of all this kingdom ; and which, a month or two ago, expected the immediate surrender of the famishing garrison which it still pretends to be besieging—this mighty army is now so far reduced that it thinks itself highly fortunate when its leaders are able to bring into camp a small convoy of provisions at the price of a lost battle."

"Then Naples must be quite relieved!" exclaimed Isidora while she mentally added, raising her kerchief to her eyes, "Wherefore, my dear parents, wherefore could you not have escaped till now!"

"Thrice fortunate Naples to be able to excite so dear an interest!" the Marquis cried. "Oh would you, dear lady, would you but transfer that interest to a country more worthy of gentle vows!"

"How fares the commander in chief, the noble Mareschal de Lautrec?" enquired Isidora.

"Ill, lady; ill and obstinate as usual; he persists in maintaining all his distant out-posts, that Philibert of Orange may have the pleasure of routing them all separately. He still strives to keep about, but he is unwell: they are all dead or unwell. My nephew is dead; de Vaudemont is dying; Navarra is dying; Triulzi is dying; all our secretaries, all our quarter-masters, all our aides-de-camp are either dead or dying: and de Saluces himself," he added, tenderly taking her hand, "de Saluces himself is more to be pitied than all, for he is slain by the wilful cruelty of one who might bid him ever live in love and joy."

"Forbear, Monseigneur," answered Isidora withdrawing her hand with offended dignity. "I am compelled to pray you to check a discourse unworthy of yourself and of me."

"Unworthy of neither of us, dearest Isidora. The tribute of love is ever due to one so beautiful ; and surely I should be but a recreant knight could I fail to do homage to divinity so perfect."

"Pardon me, my Lord ; but again I must say such language is unworthy of us both. It

which he immediately desisted. "Believe me that love levels all ranks and blends all titles beneath its own rose-coloured banner. When was the interchange of hearts subjected to the herald's art? When did loving heart enquire the state and degree of the heart that loved it?"

"Monseigneur," said Isidora after a short pause, evidently occasioned by severe internal struggle, "Your Highness compels me to do that which is most repugnant to maiden modesty."

The deathly paleness which had overspread her features, during the last few moments, gave way to a crimson blush as she added: "In the hope of checking this delusion, which yields not to any better feeling, I own to your Highness that I already love."

She hid her face in her hands and wept bitterly.

"Nay! nay!" said the Marquis, "I will never begin or urge my suit by causing those

bright eyes to be dimmed with tears ; your love shall be your own free gift, however long de Saluces may have to pine for it ! A curse upon this plaguy weakness !" he cried as he made a vain effort to rise and move towards her. "I told you, fair lady," he added with a faint smile, "I told you that hope alone kept me alive when all the rest of the camp was dying ; and now you are slaying me by striving to take away my hope. De Saluces, however, will not die yet—neither will he relinquish hope."

He made another effort to rise ; then paused languidly on his knees ere he could gain his feet, and, after wavering a moment, fell back insensible on the cushion.

For an instant, Isidora was so overcome by surprise as to be unable to move from the place where she stood : but soon recollecting herself, she rushed to an adjoining outer room and summoned her attendant and fellow prisoner, Osmanna. The girl hastened in, beck-

oning to Bernardo to follow, with a smile which plainly showed that she bore him no ill will for the very unbecoming manner in which he had testified to her his love and jealousy. To feel a pride in the suspicious importance which another attaches to its affections, is a natural movement of the human heart; and the manner in which that importance had been exhibited by Bernardo, was too much in accordance with the manners of his country and with his own violent, although crafty, temperament, seriously to displease the vain and simple-hearted Osmanna. Had she been an heroic Frenchwoman, she would have exclaimed in the words which Racine puts into the mouth of Berenice—

"Si Titus est jaloux, Titus est amoureux :"

as it was, although she was sorry for the death of the poor man-at-arms, yet she could not but feel secretly flattered that her love had been deemed of sufficient value to have occasioned it.

While she and Bernardo Accorto began to busy themselves about the person of the Marquis of Saluces, Consalvo Berretta also entered the room and stooped over him.

"It is nothing," he said, feeling his pulse; "a mere fainting fit. Leave Bernardo to unstrap his armour and to have him carried away, and follow thou me."

He opened the window of the little room and passed out into the wide orchard or kitchen garden, in which vines and fig-trees, with here and there a glossy orange or a pale drooping olive tree, contended with Indian corn and garden vegetables which should draw most nourishment from the inexhaustible fertility of the soil and climate. Isidora timidly followed; and joined him as he slowly paced a vine-covered alley at the further extremity of the garden.

"How came this accident to pass?" he enquired as he took her hand into both of his and gazed into her blushing face with less than his usual austerity.

"I hardly know, reverend father," Isidora began to reply, when the Recluse interrupted her harshly saying,

"Thou dost: for thou dost blush. What had he been saying to thee?"

"He had been talking to me in the complimentary way which they say is natural to all Frenchmen, but which I do not like: and so, in the hope that I might stop him, I told him that I loved already."

"And art thou weak enough to think that a mere dissolute worlding like this Marquis would faint away for the love of thee or of any other toy?"

"Indeed father, I do not: he was very poorly already, I am certain he was. But oh, cannot we leave this place and go to some retired spot until all this war and violence be ended?"

"It may not be," replied Consalvo. "Thou art safer here than thou couldst be elsewhere. The whole country is scoured and sacked and

greater dangers than being
to his unmeaning gallantry
therefore ; for I myself am
my hermitage in the island

“ To return, padre ? but
prisoner as much as I am ? ”

“ Not quite : I am a prisoner
none will heed whether I suffer
poor fools have enough to do
themselves.”

At that moment the Major
himself stepped out at the door
the house and slowly advanced
along the centre walk of the garden
was about to fly, but the Englishman
wrist in his powerful grasp and

"Never seek to fly when thou knowest that thou canst not escape," he said. "A show of trust in his honour, as they call it, will best restrain him."

With slow and unsteady steps, de Saluces drew nigh. His heavy but elegant armour had been removed; and his person was now wrapped in a loose gown of crimson brocade; a broad-brimmed hat of velvet of the same colour, looped up with a string of large pearls, shaded his head from the noon-day sun. He leaned as he advanced on a sheathed sword, the scabbard and hilt of which were resplendent with all the gorgeous richness used in those days.

"Fair lady," he said smiling languidly, "I come to apologise for my rudeness in fainting away at your feet: but it is a crime which must have been so often committed before you, that I will hope not to be too severely punished by your displeasure. I marvel not," he continued as Isidora, rendered less confident by

the presence of Consalvo, did not reply to his advances, "I marvel not that you have sought the holy padre: but I trust that he will not absolve you for all your sins, until you promise to be less cruel for the future."

"Trifle not with that which is holy," exclaimed Consalvo sternly. "And trifle not with the honour of the daughter of a Neapolitan noble, whom thou hast unjustly detained. She is under thy protection, Marquis of Saluces; and shouldst thou abuse it, I will proclaim thee a base and recreant knight through every court of Europe. Not, however, that I doubt thee," he added; "thou wilt not belie thy noble race, although thou art too unstable to add fresh lustre to its glories now that the occasion serves and that the eyes of Europe are upon thee."

"Your preachment, reverend father, is most excellent I doubt not," replied the Marquis; "only as I do not exactly understand the latter part of it perhaps you will cut it short and

leave me to enjoy the society of this noble lady and the evening breeze, which is now rising and is grateful to my wearied frame."

"Go repose thee rather, and take a cup of wine to recruit thine energies for that which is required of thee. Thou dost not understand my preachment, sayest thou?" continued Consalvo. "Know, then, that the Maréchal de Lautrec is dead: and that the command of this once victorious army is devolved upon thee."

"Dead! de Lautrec dead!" exclaimed the Marquis, with a look of dismay.

"Aye dead," reiterated the Recluse, "dead of grief and despair for the miserable end which awaits his triumphant campaign. While thou hast out with thy troops this morning and idling away the after hours at the feet of her whom I confide to thy honour, de Lautrec's proud spirit fled from the defeat and disgrace which it is thine to avert—or to encrease."

Still holding the hand of Isidora, the Re-

cluse turned him towards the farm-house. A body of officers entered the garden at the same time by another gate, and brought to the Marquis de Saluces the confirmation of all that Consalvo had announced. In the confusion which ensued, the latter past unheeded through the disorderly camp of the sufferers ; and was soon greeted with cheers of triumph by the advanced posts of Spaniards and Neapolitans to whom he was so well known.

CHAPTER III.

DONNA GIULIA OF GONZAGA.

Oh she doth teach the torches to burn bright !
Her beauty hangs upon the cheek of night
Like a rich jewel in an Ethiop's ear :
Beauty too rich for use, for earth too dear !
So shows a snowy dove trooping with crows,
As yonder lady o'er her fellows shows.

SHAKESPEAR.

THE summer had passed away : the leaves
had begun to wither on the fig trees : the
leaves had grown transparent, and gave pro-
mise of an abundant harvest : it was the
beginning of the month of September ; and
dora still remained in the quarters of his

Highness of Saluces, and was, apparently, quite forgotten by her eccentric protector.

Such, however, was not the case. The indirect intercourse which he kept up with the world, made Consalvo Berretta perfectly aware of the state of parties in the city and in the camp; and he knew the time to be drawing near when the weakened forces of the French commander would be no longer able to protect his own narrowed intrenchments. Should they be forced by the enemy, he trembled to think what might be the fate of her in whom he was interested. He remembered his former intention of removing her to the care of the lady of Gonzaga; and this purpose he now prepared himself to accomplish or to encounter, at her side, whatever dangers she might be exposed to.

He left his cell, equipped with his own peculiar and solemn attributes, and ascended to the plain just above the cliffs. There he found several peasants who, leaving the broad

nets they had extended to catch the innumerable flights of quails that alight on the island at this season of the year—drew near and prostrated themselves before him. The Recluse gave them his blessing with all the softness of his usual bearing; and enquiring kindly what success had rewarded their toil, appeared to interest himself in all the details they gave him of their little private hopes and fears, sorrows and joys. To some he gave advice; to some, money—the superabundance, he said, of what the faithful bestowed on himself: with all, he seemed to sympathise: by all, he was revered as a benefactor, a holy man, a friend. But while thus appearing to be engrossed in the consideration of the wants of his poor neighbours, Consalvo Berretta did not neglect to throw out casual enquiries of those who attended the Neapolitan markets; and by collating all he heard, he soon convinced himself that no time was to be lost, if he would rescue

Isidora from the imminence of the dangers to which the French camp was exposed.

No sooner had he obtained this confirmation of his fears than, allowing his conversation with the peasants to draw to a natural close, he said, in the careless manner of one who knew that his wishes would be considered commands and his commands favours, "My children, one of you shall carry me over to Sorrento in your boat."

Instantly they all started from their work; and with features beaming with hope and excitement, cried "Mine!"—"Take mine, holy padre."—"No, mine sails the fastest."

"Thine, Massaniello, shall serve me," said Consalvo with dignity: "thy home is at Sorrento: and I would not take these good fishermen from their employment."

He raised his cross on high and blessed them all as he signed it over them: then, preceded by the wild-looking fisherman whom we have before met, he descended to the beach

and entered the little boat whose broad sail soon wafted him across the narrow sea to the main land.

But little conversation took place between the Recluse and the boatman during their short passage. The former was evidently deeply pre-engaged by his own thoughts, and seldom raised his forehead from the palm of the hand on which he rested it. Massaniello felt too deep a respect for his sacred character to venture to interrupt his reflections: sadly, therefore, and with a disappointed air, he placed his naked feet upon the centre bench, and flinging back his body, wielded the short oars with all the energy of his muscular frame and his impetuous character.

"How fares thy wife now?" at length the Recluse asked.

"As one may, holy father, who has been insulted by the German soldiery. But since I avenged her upon one of them, I think, that by the blessing of San Gennaro, she will soon look up again."

"Yes," answered Consalvo: "thou didst me good service in that attack on the robber captain, Schertel. May God pardon thee if the feeling of private revenge urged thee on! Think on this, my son; and repent. But tell me now, dost thou know the follower of the Count of Procida, Bernardo Accorto, who called on thee at the beginning of that affray?"

"I do not, reverend father. He must have known me by name and by sight. Many do:—and if it please heaven, more shall," he added in a subdued tone.

"He will shortly be in thy neighbourhood—near Sorrento," continued the hermit: "watch him: find out who are his companions: what are his purposes: be wary, but be silent."

He rose to step on shore as he spoke: the fisherman seized his hand and carried it respectfully to his lips, with a request for his blessing and an assurance that his wishes

should be attended to. Using his tall cross as a walking staff and receiving the homage of all whom he chanced to meet, Consalvo advanced along the rocky paths which led across that picturesque promontory.

After a steady walk for a couple of hours, he reached the summit of the ridge of mountain where it fell away in a wide chasm well wooded with sweet chesnut trees and odoriferous shrubs and evergreens. This opening widened as it sloped down to the east: and soon he perceived, standing amid a small expanse of even ground, adorned with clusters of timber whose foliage stood out in every brilliant hue of the season, and above which the neighbouring rocks beetled in romantic cliffs—soon he perceived, amid this rock-encircled bower, a small but elegant villa whose appearance had something of the mixed character of a monastery, a farm-house, a cottage orné, and a chateau. Flights of hewn stone steps adorned with balustrades and



whatever aspect
obtained of the ea
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The door was, a
without pausing t
nounce his visit, a
and advanced across
or guessed to be t
sitting-room in the
the wide prospect
ravines of Amalfi, the
the coast of Pæstum
the expanse of intens
beneath his feet—all fl
three widely-opened w
the threshold into th
mark

hearing the sound of his footstep. She was dressed in mourning weeds: but neither her manner nor her conversation gave evidence of much heartfelt sorrow.

"You, holy Consalvo!" she exclaimed in a tone of surprise. "I declare, by all the blessed saints, that it is so!" she cried, as she darted across the room and seizing one of the Recluse's hands bore it to her lips while she gently drew him towards the window. "How kind of you, to come and visit me in this dull place. Do you know that I am almost moped to death with looking out all alone on that dreary bay of Salerno!"

"The works of God are, however, spread forth in splendid array!" answered Consalvo in an almost reproving tone as he stood beside her at the window.

"The works of God—truly, good father," answered the lady: "but, know you, that we are not all made to be hermits; and just

now, I should prefer to look down on the works of man."

"War—murder—robbery—sacrilege," answered Consalvo slowly.

"Oh, very shocking, very bad indeed!" replied the lady: "but what would the world be without them?"

"An abode of peace, of love, of beauty; an abode in which Donna Giulia of Gonzaga might be truly an angel."

"Ha! ha! ha!" exclaimed the mourner in clear, bell-like tones, as different from the usual laughter of mortals as the notes of a flute are from the screeching of a bagpipe: the laughter of Donna Giulia was as elegant, as gentle, as natural, and as lady-like as every thing else about her. "Ha! ha! ha! I do so thank you, holy padre, for making that pretty speech! Do you know, I have not heard any such for months, and I began to fear that I should never hear them again."

"I spake more of the qualities of the soul,

dy, than of outward-perfections. Yet not that I would deny or lead thee sprise them. The world knows, nor thou thyself be ignorant, that God has ed thee with beauty surpassing that of women. Thou hast the greater means fluencing all hearts to adore His ess."

ow, for heaven's sake, do not be s!" exclaimed Donna Giulia. "No come near me that I can influence y purpose whatever. Oimé! oimé!" ghed with an exaggerated expression guor and ennui.

salvo looked annoyed, but spoke not.

is of no use looking cross!" she said e observed his expression. "I have ed one visitor at last; and though he be r man, he shall talk to me of the world f the world's ways. Tell me now, you now everything, tell me what the armies oing down yonder; and why one party

or the other does not gain the victory and free me from this endless imprisonment? Do you know that I have been cooped up here all the summer because they say that none of the towns are safe?"

"The war draws to a close," Consalvo began to say.

"Bless you, bless you for saying so!" cried Donna Giulia interrupting him and catching hold of both his hands in hers. "Now mind and make that prophecy come true," she added with much mock gravity: "do not let it be a second edition of your promise to poor Don Ugo and his fleet!" she said; and she held up one finger and shook it at him with a playful show of menace.

"Lady, my vision—" again began the Recluse in a tone of expostulation.

"I know, I know all about it, ha! ha! ha!" cried the lady interrupting him. "Now do not be angry, there is a good saint, but forgive me," she added more seriously; "forgive me on consideration of the pleasure I

feel in seeing you or any body ; and do tell me when the country will be at peace again, and when we may expect to have some more gaieties and tournaments and amusements. I hope the French will succeed : they say that King Charles held such a splendid court when he was at Naples ! ”

“ And yet all thy family are on the side of the Emperor ! ” observed Consalvo.

“ Oh, never mind about that ; the French are the most gallant cavaliers ; ” said the lady.

“ Lady, I came to speak to thee about these matters,” said the hermit seriously ; “ and to ask of thee a great personal favour.”

“ Any thing if you will not look so grave, my dear padre Consalvo.”

“ The French camp will be stormed before many days pass on,” continued Consalvo : “ and the leader of the once-flourishing army, the Marquis de Saluces, has not the means to resist. In that camp, is a prisoner—a young

lady whose welfare I have at heart. I am about to deliver her; but know not whither to take her to a place of safety."

"Bring her here," cried Donna Giulia: "if this place is so secure that I am condemned to it, she also will be safe while with me."

"The object of my visit was to ask thy permission to do so; and I thank thee for having so freely granted it: she is a mere child; but she is of noble blood and a fit

"No one will be deemed fair beside Donna Giulia of Gonzaga; but yet Isidora"—

"Oh then she *is* pretty, and that is a pretty name! When will you bring her, holy father?—for I am so tired of my own society"—

"As soon as possible, Lady; and I thank thee for the permission so freely granted. Thy heart is good, although thy manner be so lightsome. Fare thee well. Consalvo prays for blessings upon thy beautiful head."

The lady knelt humbly on one knee to receive the blessing of the renowned Recluse and reverently kissed his hand as he turned him to depart: then walking to a large mirror at the end of the room, she was greeted by a smiling face, on which neither she nor others could look without renewed and encreased delight.

And yet, reader, Donna Giulia of Gonzaga, the widowed Duchess of Palliano—she who was celebrated throughout the world as the most beautiful woman in Italy—had red hair!

Not that transition colour of which romancers rave under the name of auburn; but real, downright carrotty red!

But then her complexion and those little blue veins coursing beneath her transparent skin!—

No; we will not attempt a description of that which pen and ink—nay which language itself could never pourtray. The Andromeda of Rospigliosi, the Mistress of Titian, his Venus at Florence, her of Guido at Dresden—the excellencies of each and of all were blended in Giulia of Gonzaga; and shall written words attempt to reveal them?—

Bethink thee, reader, of the images we have suggested to thee.

CHAPTER V.

BERNARDO'S SUCCESS.

There now to him who sails
Under the shore, a few white villages
Scattered above, below, some in the clouds,
Some on the margin of the dark blue sea,
And glittering through their lemon groves, announce
The region of Amalfi. Then, half-fallen,
A lonely watch-tower on the precipice,
Their ancient land-mark, comes. Long may it last ;
And to the seamen in a distant age,
Though now he little thinks how large his debt,
Serve for their monument !

ROGERS.

Venit post multos una serena dies.

TRIBULLUS.

TURN we to the farm house in which the
Marquis of Saluces still held his head quarters
the centre of the French camp.
That ill-starred leader reclined on a cushion

at the feet of Isidora de' Massimi and gazed up reproachfully into her beautiful face.

"Cruel, cruel fair one," he said, "to receive thus severely the knight who, to obey your implied wishes, has so long undergone the pains of absence rather than intrude upon your privacy! I had hoped to find you obduracy die away before the monotony of your existence in these wretched quarters and mine own persevering homage."

"I thank your Grace, on the contrary," replied Isidora, "for having afforded me so quiet, so safe a retreat. Solitude is never irksome to me, even when I am thought to be most alone."

"Thought to be alone! nay, by our Lady," exclaimed the Marquis, "no one can have presumed to intrude upon the privacy of our quarters!"

"You mistake me, my Lord: I have had no companion save my thoughts, and my God and his blessed angels."

"A la bonheur!" cried the Marquis. "I began to fear some presumptuous meddler might have intruded. How I envy those aunts, fair lady, to whom you address your warm and pure orisons!"

"Wherefore envy them?" asked Isidora mildly. "I would address the same prayers your Grace could I hope that you would hear me, as I believe they do."

"Hear thee, dear girl!" cried the Marquis. "Breathe but the slightest wish that deities can bestow, and I swear to thee that shall be granted."

"Oh thanks, thanks, noble Prince!" answered Isidora. "I will at once pray to you. I ever pray to my most trusted patrons:—deliver me, oh deliver me, I beseech you, from this strait, and remove me from the clutches of wicked men."

As she spoke, she uplifted and joined her little hands in the attitude of supplication; while her sweet countenance beamed

with an expression of confidence, earnestness, hope, and genuine simplicity. De Saluce started to his feet; and clasping her in his arms, imprinted a fervent kiss upon her glowing cheek.

"Insolent!" cried the ardent girl shaking him off with the momentary energy of despair. The impulse was but momentary: she sunk again upon the couch and gave way to a flood of tears.

"Pardon me, in pity pardon me," exclaimed the Marquis casting himself on one knee before her and taking her hand with a soothing and repentant expression. "I have done wrong, I feel it: but nature could not withstand that touching appeal. We men of the world are unused to it: and oh! if you knew its effect upon us, you would hold me pardoned and exculpated. Nay, dry those beautiful eyes," he said, as the poor child continued to weep bitterly. "De Saluces owns that he has done wrong, and will strive

to restrain himself for the future. More he cannot do: and the proudest beauty at the court of King Francis, would not reject his prayer for pardon, even had she slighted his first appeal."

"Class not me with them, my Lord," said Isidora proudly and angrily.

"I would not; no, by heavens! I would not: they are as inferior to thee in beauty as in everything else. Francis once undertook a campaign to Lombardy that he might bless his eyes with the sight of a fair Signora of Milan: had he known what Naples contained, de Saluces had not now been charged with the command of this hapless army."

Isidora spoke not: she sat wrapt in meditation upon the perils that surrounded her. De Saluces proceeded. "There is the belle Ferronière, of whom the King now raves," he said, "oh Dame! I could tell him of one before whom her charms would appear as trifling as is the jewel which ever clasps her

brows compared to this massive chain which girds thy perfect form!"

"Monseigneur, you forget your promise," Isidora said with what steadiness she could command.

"Impossible, dear Lady, for I vowed to love thee to the death. Oh, leave with me this miserable country of war, famine and pestilence; and let us seek peace and happiness in my own noble region of healthy blasts, of hurrying torrents, and of snow-capped Alps!"

Again he took her hand; but it was with an appearance of sympathy, respect and tenderness awakened perhaps by the recollection of the land of his birth. So much do the impulses of the heart depend upon one another that, when one nerve is moved, others generally vibrate responsive to the touch:—so in the descent to evil quickened, so is the rise to better feelings suggested and encouraged.

"Monseigneur, you made me a promise," again repeated Isidora in accents rendered

firmer by hope in the new expression which had stolen over the countenance of the Marquis.

“What was it?” asked de Saluces in a more natural tone; “what was it? Excuse me, but in very sooth, I can think of nought but thee when thou art present.”

“You swore to me that you would grant any request for which I would pray to you.”

“I meant that I would, were I one of the saints to whom you address your gentle orisons.”

“And wherefore should you not be one, Monseigneur? Wherefore should not you be one of those blessed saints? What toils, what anxieties do you undergo while striving to uphold this wretched army: none of the saints, who now enjoy the reward of their labours, ever underwent more to obtain the kingdom of heaven than you do to secure dominion in this world and to gratify your own feelings. Believe me, believe me, noble

Seigneur, that the pursuit of virtue is rewarded even in this world. You were moved just now on thinking of your own native country: you thought of the young fresh feelings of youth, of the noble aspirations that led you to climb its lofty mountains and which made you regret that they did not reach nearer to heaven. Has the world ever given you enjoyment so pure, so heartfelt? It has not, it has not: else would you not sigh when you look back on those youthful days. Oh labour

taneously suggested themselves; and she had been induced to continue by perceiving, from the working features of the Marquis, that he was deeply moved by her simple address. Her countenance was flushed; her manner was excited; and her large brown eyes, raised to the half-averted face of her persecutor, glowed with increasing hope through the tears that streamed over their long dark lashes. But the exertion, the excitement, was too much for her: the state of continual anxiety in which she had lived for the last few months, had roused her nature to a forced energy beyond its strength; and her nervous sensibilities had become too acute to withstand the unceasing calls that had been made upon them. They had overpowered her towards the conclusion of her thrilling appeal: and as the last words trembled upon her paling and quivering lips, her powers gave way, and she fell back fainting on the couch from which she had risen to speak.

De Saluces hastened to her assistance. Casting himself on his knees beside the sofa, he wound his arm round her slender waist and, with words of gentle endearment, strove to recal her to herself.

"Pardon, oh pardon me, dear girl," he said. "Open those lovely eyes; be thyself once more; and de Saluces swears that he will respect thy wishes. Fool that I was to attempt to win one so lovely and so holy!"

His passionate self-reproaches were interrupted by the entrance of the Recluse, Consalvo; who, observing the attitude of the prince as he bent over the reclining form of the maiden, brushed up towards him, and, seizing his sword belt in his powerful grasp, cast him, reeling and staggering, to the other side of the room.

"Off, recreant villain!" he cried; "nor pollute with thy dissolute touch her who was entrusted to thy pretended honour."

"Silence, old fool!" exclaimed the prince.

"See you not that the lady has fainted? I would but bear her to her chamber.

Again he drew near as if he would raise the fainting girl from her couch. Again Consalvo thrust him aside. "Open the casement," he said in a commanding tone; while he lifted the slight form in his arms and bore it out to the vine-covered verandah. There, seating himself upon a rustic seat, he laid her, like an infant, across his knees; and, while the Marquis hastened to fetch cold water from the neighbouring fountain, he murmured half-audible words of tenderness and revenge.

"Fear not, dear child," he said, "fear not. Open those dear eyes that flash into the heart the old Recluse bright rays of other times. Awake, awake, carina: none shall harm thee: none shall displease thee with impunity."

The fresh water had scarcely bathed those robbing temples, than Isidora again looked up: her limbs trembled with a convulsive movement as her eyes rested upon the figure of de

Saluces. Then gazing quickly round to ascertain in whose arms she lay, a bright smile of surprise and joy beamed over her countenance as she recognised the frock of the hermit. She wound her two arms confidently round his neck, and laying her head upon his shoulder, gave way to a flood of happy tears. The old man kindly pressed her to his breast; and as he bent his weather-beaten face down upon her transparent cheek, and mingled his grizzly flowing beard with

will be an altered man. Father, do you too forgive me; it is not for those who wear thy garb to harbour resentment."

Isidora unwound her grasp round the hermit's neck; and looking up confidently in his face, while she timidly and yet frankly extended her hand to the Marquis, she murmured, "Forgive him, holy father; and he will send us home, thankful and happy."

De Saluces reverently received that beautiful hand which trembled at his touch, while the blood rushed to the tips of her fingers as he pressed them respectfully to his lips. Consalvo Berretta rose from his seat; and carefully supporting Isidora on his arm, moved towards the room they had just quitted.

"I presume then, Monseigneur," he said, "I presume that thou wilt not oppose my purpose to remove this dear lady immediately from thy camp?"

"Far from it: that camp can no longer defend even my worthless self: and I would

not now seek to retain the Signorina, contrary to wishes which she has so eloquently expressed."

One half-hour was employed by Osmanna and Bernardo in preparing for the departure of their mistress. At the end of that time, the Marquis de Saluces conducted her and her protector to the gate of the farm house. There seating her upon a beautifully formed and richly caparisoned Spanish jennet—one of the few remains of former conquest—the commander took leave of her with more outward show of respect and with more heartfelt devotion than often attends the bestowal of lordly homage. An officer accompanied the party and conducted them through the weak, but now contracted, outposts of the army. The advanced positions of the Spanish and Neapolitan troops were at no great distance; and by them the Recluse was received with that respect and devotion which was paid to him by all to whom he was known. Mules

were immediately brought forward for the accommodation of himself and of the two servants; and the cheers of the troopers and the benedictions of the peasantry accompanied him as he advanced on his way through Castellamare to the residence of Donna Giulia of Gonzaga.

Let us here recount the conclusion of that haunted expedition into Italy with the announcement of which our historical chronicle opened. On the night following the release of Isidora, the Marquis of Saluces collected the wretched remains of his army and endeavoured to retreat to the little fortified town of Aversa, there to await assistance from beyond the Alps: he was attacked on his march by the Imperialists and again routed. With those who survived, he effected his escape to the town; and, a day or two afterwards, was glad to capitulate to the Prince of Orange and save the lives of his men on condition that they should give up their colours,

baggage, arms, and horses, and take an oath not to serve again against the Emperor for the next six months: that he himself and the other principal leaders should remain as prisoners in the hands of their conquerors; and that he should use his best endeavours to procure the immediate restoration to the Emperor of all the rest of the kingdom which, but a few months before, he had conquered at the head of what the world deemed an irresistible army. That army had melted away: and leaving the corpse of de Lautrec behind it, and de Saluces, its second commander, in the hands of the enemy, it was glad to escape back beyond the frontiers, following the few inferior officers who were permitted to accompany it upon the wretched mules which were presented to them by the generosity of the conqueror. Thus was the dominion of Austria confirmed in Italy

* * * * *

"Per servir sempre o venutrice o vinta."

* * * * *

Isidora and her escort arrived, at nightfall, at the residence of the illustrious Donna Giulia. That lady met them in the hall; and taking her visitor kindly by the hand, led her into the saloon, where an elegant supper, bright with the glitter of many lamps, was already spread out.

"I am so glad you are come!" she exclaimed to Isidora. "Now, then, I may hope to live a while longer: for know that I had resolved to escape from my own society by casting myself, like the lady the scholars tell us of, from one of these rocks into that monotonous sea."

"I am thankful to you, Signora Duchessa, for so kindly receiving a poor orphan," Isidora timidly replied.

"A truce to Signora Duchessa," cried Donna Giulia. "You and I must be friends and sisters. But, Santa Maria," she exclaimed as her visitor lifted off the hat and travelling mask then usually worn—"Santa Maria, how pretty you are!"

Isidora blushed deeply; but having been accustomed to reply to compliments of late, said something about an impossibility that any one should be deemed beautiful beside the renowned Lady Giulia.

"Ha! ha! ha!" the Duchess trilled forth in her pretty manner. "But really and truly I shall be jealous of you. If I had known the sort of person you were, I do not think I should have ventured to receive you."

"Misrepresent not thine own kindness of disposition, lady," said the Recluse. "Thou didst receive Isidora to gratify no selfish vanity; and thou wilt find that her heart is more worthy to excite thy competition than her outward beauty."

"Do not be grave, holy padre Consalvo," exclaimed Donna Giulia shaking her finger at him. "I shall feel no jealousy of Isidora, because no one comes to this dull place whom she might win from me. But only look at her and see if I should not otherwise have

cause to dread the effect of that hair and those clear brown eyes! To be sure I am taller than she; and I believe my shape is not deformed."

"Nothing can be more perfect!" said Isidora striving to enter into the spirit of her hostess, and surveying her tall, slim, and yet full and rounded figure that moved about with the easy, sprightly, and wavy motion of a clear running streamlet passing over a bed of grass and flowers.

"Yes, the figure is well enough, I believe," responded Donna Giulia playfully: "but then compare my red hair with your rich brown locks!"

"The hair that I have always heard described with such enthusiasm!" exclaimed Isidora. "People said it was so unusual, and looked so distinguished in a crowd of other ladies and at court. It is just like the golden hair which all the painters give to the most beautiful saints."

"Yes: they may call it gold or sunbeams, or yellow, or what they will; but it is plain orange-red hair for all that!" said the Duchess. "How fortunate I am that my eye-brows and eye-lashes are not red also! I think they are almost as good as yours. What say you, holy Consalvo?"

"I lament, lady, that thou shouldst pretend to be ignorant that the dark-brown eye-brows and eye-lashes which overshadow thy full deep blue eyes give to thy person a charm of which the world raves."

"Ha! ha!" exclaimed the Duchess. "Holy Consalvo, you are a perfect courtier. But you forget that I have not the clear brown complexion of your pretty friend: my transparent white skin cannot hide my blushes for a single instant. You should, therefore, be merciful in your compliments."

"Thou hast a light and, I trust, an innocent heart, lady, which is far to be preferred to all the fleeting charms of the person,"

said the Recluse. "Keep them and cherish them. And now that I see that thou art well inclined towards the young child whom I have entrusted to thee, I will leave ye."

"Not so soon, dear padre Consalvo!" expostulated Isidora.

"The blessing of God be upon you both," continued the Recluse. "I have endured a fatiguing day: and will seek the abode of an old and very dear friend—the good priest of Amalfi—whence I shall return early to-morrow to my peaceful hermitage."

He raised his cross with more than his usual solemnity, and implored every blessing upon the two friends:—for friends they already felt themselves to be. Those two lovely heads bent low to receive the benediction; and as the Recluse left the room, Donna Giulia ran towards her new companion and embraced her again and again with all fervour of Neapolitan demonstration.

The two ladies supped cheerfully together:

the Duchess leading the conversation with the ease of a woman of the world and with the grace and sprightliness peculiar to herself. Isidora, without relinquishing her own more serious manner, adopted enough of the other's lighter tone to sustain the spirit of the dialogue. Never had two more beautiful women met under the same roof: each rejoiced in admiring the other, and each felt the satisfaction of renewed and restored society after a long interval of solitude and restraint. To Isidora, was added the still greater comfort of feeling herself in a place of security—relieved from the annoying admiration which she had so long suffered from the heavy German Schertel or the gallant de Saluces.

After enjoying, for a couple of hours, these mutual sentiments of satisfaction, Isidora was conducted by her friend to a handsome sleeping apartment which had been prepared for her next to her own. Here again embracing her, she bid her get all the beauty-sleep she could,

that her appearance might not suffer from the fatigues she had undergone during the day.

"Bravo! Bravo! Bernardo Accorto!" said that worthy personage to himself as, after wresting a kiss from Osmanna, he turned him to his own garret—"Bravo, Bernardo! All goes on prosperously. Here they are, in the same house! and Sinan lies unknown in the cavern below! Who shall say that Bernardo Accorto cannot both plan and perform? Praised be Allah, all goes on well!"

CHAPTER VI.

THE SEARCH.

Après la richesse,
Joyeux pèlerin,
Moi je cours sans cesse

source of profit had been neglected during the changes which had, of late, chequered the fate of the lady de' Massimi. The gold, which he believed to be hid in her father's house, was as far from his grasp as ever. Nor, indeed, could he well imagine any plan by which he might possess himself of it. The troubles of the siege were now at an end; the city was fast subsiding into its usual quiescent state—into a repose like that of Vesuvius between a past and a threatening eruption; and the Cardinal Pompeo of Colonna, the new Viceroy, was striking terror into the minds of all, by the rigorous measures which he had adopted to introduce order and submission where military violence and aristocratic license had so long reigned supreme. The promising scheme by which Bernardo had once planned to carry off the treasure during a tumult to be raised by Captain Schertel—could not be thought of under the altered circumstances of the city.

Naples, indeed, was no longer the same. The grandees and nobles were now no longer permitted to rescue criminals from the hands of justice; to break open houses; or to shelter in their palaces bravos and assassins, equally ready to fulfil the commands of their patrons or to overpower the police force in their own quarrels. The bodies of two renowned leaders of rebellious robbers swung in the market square: and with a sympathetic quivering of his muscles, Bernardo saw an old friend, a noted malefactor, conducted by the followers of the Prince of Salerno and humbly surrendered to the awful servants of the tribunal of justice.

"What baseness!" exclaimed Bernardo Accorto to a comrade. "What treachery in him of Salerno to surrender an old follower to the Sbirri! and one, too, who, having once escaped and taken refuge in his palace, had every right to deem himself in safety!"

"Oimé, amico mio!" replied the other,

"I fear me that times are changed for a while. The cursed Cardinal sent word to the Prince that, unless poor Pietro was surrendered on the instant, he would confiscate the whole of his patron's property to the uses of the state."

"Diamine!" exclaimed Bernardo; and the two worthies moved onwards together.

Arrived in front of the vice-regal palace, a new source of discomfort startled the imagination of the faithful follower of our hero. He was surprised to see a low scaffolding of rude materials erected in the square: executioner, criminal—both were there: but instead of the low block and the heavy axe, Bernardo marked with amazement a highly raised stool or table, a short curved sword, a brazier of heated embers.

"In the name of the Prophet, what means this new exhibition?" exclaimed Bernardo addressing his friend.

"In the name of San Gennaro where hast

thou been living of late not to have heard of that of which all Naples has talked for the last three days? Yonder poor devil on the scaffolding is of the household of the Cardinal. In some passing squabble, he struck a fellow-servant with his fist, while both were waiting in the ante-chamber of his reverence. It seems that there is an old law which makes this to be an affront to his vice-regal Highness; and the poor fellow is to lose his hand. In faith, if equal justice were meted out, the Cardinal himself would have been deprived of his head, as well as of his hat, for the affronts which he is said to have put upon the holy father, the Pope, in his own palace! But stay, the game is going to begin. It must be an awkward thing, nevertheless, not to have a right hand with which to handle one's stiletto!"

"Pshaw!" said Bernardo between his teeth; "one may soon learn to use his left hand; and a blow from it will be less expected. But, hist; yonder servant of the

Court is about to read something for our edification, as the preachers say."

An official of the tribunal now, in fact, stepped forward to the front of the scaffolding; and made proclamation, to the assembled multitude of gazers, that, although the criminal had, by his insolent disregard of the sacred precincts of the palace, subjected himself to the loss of his right hand, yet would his Reverence, out of the abundance of his generous pity, consent that the law should vindicate its authority by requiring only the amputation of the left hand in lieu of that which had justly incurred its vengeance.

Shouts of applause, at the generous magnanimity of the Viceroy, uprose from the servants and retainers of the Cardinal, who idly sauntered around. By the dense multitude of the Neapolitans, the announcement was received with a dead silence or with a murmur of suppressed curses. With some-

thing of an air of disappointment and increased trepidation, the criminal withdrew his right hand and placed his left upon the wood: he seemed to feel as though the nervous sensibilities of the one had been already withdrawn and centered in the other—in that other which he already considered doubly valuable from the anticipated loss of its fellow:—he seemed to feel, in resigning that one, as though he were resigning both. Yet he bore himself courageously, nevertheless. A slight twinge only passed over his features as, with the skill of one well-practised, the executioner drew the sharp glaive across his wrist: and when the hot iron was taken from the burning embers and applied to the bleeding stump, he smiled as it seethed and hissed upon the naked bone:—then fell back fainting into the arms of those who surrounded him.

“A merciful man, in sooth, is his Reverence the Viceroy!” exclaimed Bernardo in an

under tone: "but methinks had that bloody
st been mine, left hand though it be, his
cellenza and it had become better ac-
ainted ere he laid it on those planks!"

He turned him from the scene of action;
and walked on thoughtfully towards the Via
arbonara.

Would the Reader like to know whence
ame this marvellous condescension on the
art of the Viceroy which should enable his
ffended honour to be satisfied with the loss
f the left hand, rather than the right hand,
f the offender? The Viceroy, good Reader,
as a poet: nay; although one of those
iolent, dark, and designing men who, occa-
onally, disgrace the most sacred professions,
e Cardinal Don Pompeo of Colonna was a
ry pretty poet: and, as such, had been
lied, in accordance with the spirit of the
te, to seek him out an imaginary mistress
whom he might address his fervid strains.
ther bards might satisfy themselves with

obscure or even fictitious sources of inspiration: none but the most noble of the land might inspire the strains of the ambitious Cardinal; and the family of the lady had long resented the presumption which had led him to address his verses to the beautiful Isabella, Principessa of Salerno, and thus to degrade her to the level of Petrarch's Laura. The fair Princess had been, however, urged to cast such feelings aside on the present occasion, and to exert her supposed influence over her devoted swain in order to rescue an old follower of the family from a punishment so barbarous. She had done so: the Cardinal, unable entirely to resist her demand and yet unwilling to forego his revenge, had, at length, made a compromise between dignity and poetic gallantry: the right hand had been spared to the criminal, while the left had been allowed to take its place beneath the executioner's knife.

Bernardo, as we have said, continued his

walk in a meditative and saddened mood. The scene he had just witnessed led him to moralize upon his hopes and his dangers; and re-awakened the superstitious feelings and terrors which never quite slumbered within him. As he entered the Via Carbonara, he started in alarm on perceiving the majestic figure of the Recluse, Consalvo, slowly turning from the humble door of the Massimi and wending its way up a neighbouring transverse street.

"The old sorcerer!" he exclaimed, suddenly pausing where he stood. "The rascally Iettatore; I warrant me he has been blasting my prospects again! Never can I move without having my steps crossed by that man! And yet, fool that I was! I have even sought him out and striven to make use of him. True, that I have appeared to succeed; but in reality, has not every scheme been defeated so soon as he cast his evil eye upon it? Without going back to old

grievances, bethink thee, Bernardo, of all that has happened of late in Naples. We got possession of yonder house, and should have carried off the gold—which no one will ever persuade me it does not contain: in stalked the old sorcerer: the girl recovered: and my Lord, the Count, must fall in love with her! Then the fleet goes out to attack Doria: we are sure of the victory: but we meet the reverend sorcerer, and are disgracefully defeated. Then do I, like a cursed idiot who did not know his man, go and call upon this same prophet to remove the lady from the power of Schertel to the house of Donna Giulia: nothing more easy! The old Iettatore assents; and appears to fall into the trap, as if he knew nought of Bernardo Accorto. But why so? because he knew that de Saluces would interfere and check my plans. I have now got her there, at last, 'tis true; but, by the fortunes of Barbarossa, I begin to think that the old villain will overreach me at last!—for now,

Now when I only purposed to wheedle a little information out of the two dolts of servants who occupy that house, I find that he has been amongst them beforehand; and if I enter the place, it will be with his evil harm upon me! It must be done, however," he continued after a moment's reflection; "it must be done: and have a care, master ettatore; for if his designs be thwarted much longer in this manner, thou shalt find that Bernardo Accorto still retains both his hands and knows how to use them."

While he again sturdily advanced towards the house, the two old servants of the family, Francesca and Giuseppe, gazed out from a lower window and perceived him.

"By all the saints in heaven, yonder he comes!" exclaimed the old woman. "Who can doubt the word of the holy Consalvo, who has just been putting us on our guard against him?"

"Say, rather, putting thee on thy guard,"

replied Giuseppe. "He knew the dangers of thy untiring tongue; and came to warn thee against betraying too much in thy gabble."

"My gabble, forsooth!" cried Francesca. "No one could ever reproach me with betraying the interests of the family: and now that I know that the dear Signorina is well and all about her, I care not if we refuse admittance to the double-faced varlet."

"Nay, nay, he must be admitted," answered Giuseppe while the sound of the hilt of

"Stop thine own mouth, man, and never fear mine," responded Francesca angrily to her fellow servant.

"Diamine! did every one die of the plague in this house?" cried Bernardo again thundering upon the door with the hilt of his knife.

"Wilt thou promise not to speak to him till I do, and to do as I do?" asked Giuseppe. "Answer quickly ere the villain go away upon some worse errand."

"Per Bacco, it must be so!" exclaimed Bernardo: "and I had best go and inform the guard and obtain possession of the premises."

"Santa Maria! open the door!" shrieked the old woman in alarm: "open the door and I promise anything and everything."

"Beware then!" replied Giuseppe in a warning voice, as he hastened to the door, and warded back the old duenna by a motion of his arm.

The lock was turned; and Bernardo Accorto stepped into the hall.

"So, villain!" began the old woman to address him, when Giuseppe unceremoniously clapped his hand upon her mouth, and shook his finger at her significantly.

"So, friends, so!" exclaimed Bernardo looking upon this pantomime in surprise. "You keep an old comrade waiting too long in the archway. However, Giuseppe, I thank you for cutting short this good lady's address, which in very truth did not seem to be prompted by the spirit of amiability. However, it is her way. A woman must use her tongue, however little a wise man may think of all she say. Nay, nay, old lady; do not break out again," he added as Francesca was evidently on the point of assailing him. "Do not break out again, but shake hands like true comrades who follow the same noble family—and one family it will shortly be."

With a great show of frankness, he ex-

aded a hand to each. Giuseppe grasped at which was offered him ; and when the old man, refusing the sign of friendship, was turning away in scorn, he seized her withered hand and forcibly laid it in the palm of their visitor.

"Never !" cried Francesca struggling. The hand of Giuseppe was again laid on her lips ; and, as Virgil says, her "voice stuck in her throat."

"Thanks, thanks, good fellow !" exclaimed Bernardo slapping the man servant on the back. "A true comrade stands up for his friend. And I have seen one to-day who would go a pilgrimage to every shrine in Italy and his prayers enable him to extend both hands to grasp those of Bernardo Accorto."

To the two old fellow servants, this seemed to be a strong assertion—even for him who made it ; and they gazed doubtingly upon their visitor.

"It is true as I live," reiterated Bernardo :

"and could he so obtain his prayer, I doubt not that the poor devil would extend his useless pilgrimage to the tomb of the false prophet of Mecca. But methinks that you give but a cold welcome to an old fellow-servant," he continued. "Not one word of rejoicing at my escape from Captain Schertel and all the other dangers? Not one word of enquiry into the fate of the lady Isidora?"

Giuseppe spoke not: and again checked an outpouring of words from his companion by a warning gesture.

"Nay," said Bernardo seeing the effect of this action; "but it is something to have learnt how to stop a woman's tongue! I am beholden to thee, friend: and will try the experiment upon Osmanna. Will ye not enquire after Osmanna?" he said: "she speaks often of ye."

No answer was made by Giuseppe; and the old duenna who began now to understand the plan which he had adopted in order to defeat

or resist the enquiries of Bernardo, entered with delight into the scheme; and sucked in her lips and bit them with a willing energy equal to the difficulty of the undertaking; while her eyes sparkled with satisfaction and a broad smile of derision extended itself over her withered features.

"So, this is the plan, is it?" exclaimed Bernardo. "Ye are both dumb, and the old woman stands grinning like an old cat, as she is, at the idea that she is outwitting Bernardo Accorto. A curse upon the Iettatore!" he muttered to himself, "this is his work: this comes of having fallen in with him on my road!"

He stood a few minutes irresolute; unwilling to retreat; unwilling to show the vexation which he felt; and terrified, by the remembrance of the execution he had just beheld, from using that violence to which heretofore he would have immediately resorted.

"Cospetto!" he at length said: "but a man knows not how to deal with such ill-

mannered curs! I may as well return at once to the dear Signorina and tell her that ye have renounced her authority and will not make answer to that which she is most desirous to know."

Old Francesca here solemnly shook her head and laid her hand upon her heart.

"Oh, then, ye are not the ingrates I thought?" observed Bernardo: and ye will tell whether all is well and safe in the house?"

Giuseppe stared upon the speaker with an unmeaning glare while he made a warning gesture to restrain his companion.

"The question is too deep for ye, is it?" continued Bernardo after a while: "it is beyond your intelligence? In faith, I believe that ye have both spent your time over the wine flask and have made away with the gold that was entrusted to your keeping. By San Gennaro, I do; look as stupid as ye will! and depend upon it, that when the Count of

Procila returns, and he is hourly expected, when he returns, a strict investigation into your precious doings ye will have to abide."

No sign of intelligence responded to the rising anger of the speaker.

"Take your own way," he exclaimed with indignation: "take your own way: but as the present attendant of the lady Isidora who has followed her through every danger while ye were eating and drinking and stealing her substance here, I shall examine into the state of the house and report to her all I have seen. Stop me who dare."

So speaking he immediately began to walk into the different rooms of the dwelling. The two old servants followed close at his heels. Giuseppe having found an opportunity of whispering to the woman "Let him have his way; he dare not use violence. Look stupid—like me." And, indeed, the look which sat upon the never-very-intelligent features of the old serving man, well entitled him to set himself up as a model to tyros in the art

which he recommended. Bernardo passed slowly from room to room; casting suspicious glances all around, and peering into all the recesses and dark corners which were so common in houses of that age. Nothing, however, appeared to attract his particular attention in the lower rooms.

"Nearly as miserable," he muttered, "as when I first came to the rescue of the family after you, their truly faithful servants, had fled from them!"

He passed up stairs into the little room which had been so long occupied by Isidora.

"Aye; this is the room," he said. "Let me see how you have respected the bower of the Signorina. Here, too, ought to be the treasures which the old hermit stole somewhere and brought hither to be concealed."

Without casting a look on his silent companions, he passed round the bed to the side of the room on which, as he had gathered from Osmanna, was the secret recess; and began examining the folds of the old tapestry

that lined the apartment. Neither Francesca nor Giuseppe spoke; nor had they spoken during the whole of this walk through the house. Bernardo had striven to assume a total indifference to the manner in which they had received him; and had never even looked back to mark what they appeared to think of his intrusion. Giuseppe, however, had not been willing to repose implicit trust in the forbearance of the intruder or in the police of the Cardinal of Colonna: and when Bernardo began to busy himself with the hangings, he signed to the old woman to go up and touch him on the shoulder. She did so, without uttering a word. Bernardo turned sharply round, and started as he saw Giuseppe, on the other side of the room, with a *harquebus* upraised, and with its muzzle aimed and advanced to within a few feet of his head.

“Cospetto!” he exclaimed, “but this is villanous treatment of a fellow-servant. However, it matters not to Bernardo Accorto whether the gold be there or not: I shall

report your conduct to the Signorina, and tell her that ye have doubtless made away with it."

With somewhat more speed than he had before shown, he now descended the stairs and passed out into the little court. It was in its usual neglected state: save that an imperceptible addition had been made to the heap of rubbish which concealed the mouth of the important cistern.

"Lazy fools that ye are," muttered Bernardo, "not to have taken some order with this little garden! But what could be expected of a couple of dolts who, although they do not scruple to commit every sort of iniquity, dare not trust their own tongues with the secret? However, be it so; be it so. Bernardo Accorto seldom threatens, but he promises ye that he will not forget the greeting ye have given him this day."

He shook his stiletto at the pair and strode hastily along the archway. Francesca could contain herself no longer:

"Go, villain," she cried: "go, treacherous coundrel, who art more fit to be a Turk than

Christian:—go and tell thy comrades that thou hast been defeated by an old woman"—

"By an old fool!" exclaimed Giuseppe catching hold of her arms and pushing her violently within the house door, which he instantly bolted. "Canst thou not be satisfied with the victory without bragging of it? Thou hast held thy tongue for once in thy life, and see what miracles it has occasioned! not but that thy silence was itself the greatest miracle that could be wrought!"

We need not show how the old woman compensated to herself for the temporary restriction she had endured. Let the reader be assured that she talked as much on that day as on any day of her life; and that one of Bernardo's designs was, for the present, at least, defeated.

CHAPTER VI.

THE HILLS OF SORRENTO.

Non tanto il vostro buon giudizio intero
Che scrivendo d'amor chiaro mostrate
In quelle colte rime onde poggiate
La 've a gran pena s'erge altrui pensiero,
Vede, Tasso gentil, render altero ;
Quanto ch'ei schelse la maggior beltate
Che mai vedesse o questa od altra etate
Del vostro stil sol degno oggetto e vero ;
Ne scorger so, se men cortese il cielo
A voi fosse ch'a lei ; quando sì bella
La fe, dovendo i vostri scritti ornarne :
O s'ella hebbe di voi men lieta stella
Mentre per fede eterna di lei darne
Legò voi, divin spirto, ad human velo.

BERNARDO CAFFELLO.

It were impossible to describe the feelings of renovated health, youth, and elastic hope which sprung up in the bosom of Isidora de' Massimi when she found herself relieved from all anxieties and domiciliated with Donna Giulia of Gonzaga near the town of Amalfi.

For months had her feelings been lacerated and agitated by succeeding afflictions and trials: these were now, apparently, at an end; and she had come out of the ordeal with a mind strengthened to judge and to endure; with a character formed beyond her age; with a self-confidence in her own energies sustained by a firm reliance on the immediate support and guidance of heaven. She was still a child in years—at least, she would have been so deemed in any other than in those sunny regions where childhood so soon ripens into womanhood; but her mind was formed; her principles of action were settled; and habits of constant society and of constant self-dependence, had given a peculiar tone and style to her manners and conversation, which enabled her to maintain her own individuality in spite of the attractiveness by which her hostess drew most others within the fragile web of her own influences. She was able to resist that lure most fatal to the social charac-

ter of the young, and the inexperienced—the fascination of the manners of another;—the unwilling imitation of a more formed and more alluring style. Cheerfully she fell into the tone of conversation that was natural to Donna Giulia; but she had learned to do this without abandoning that style of thought and those more earnest modes of expression which were peculiarly her own.

“One would think, Carina,” exclaimed the Duchess addressing her one balmy evening about this time, as they clomb over the rocks and wound their way down among the orange-trees towards the shores of Sorrento, enjoying the bracing influences of a long autumnal walk—“One would think that thou hadst passed thy whole life at court or at college; thou art so demure, so quiet, and so self-confident! I can never persuade thee to give up what thou callest thy settled convictions to my lighter fancies.”

“Where, dearest Duchess,” asked Isidora, “where would be the charm of conversation

if I were at once to assent to whatever you might chance to say on the fancy of the moment?"

"Oh horrible, dear!" answered the elder lady; "but I spoke not of those fatiguing people who echo every word one says like the painted birds of the east. I always drive them away from me as soon as possible: I would rather converse with thy old friend the Recluse, who thwarts and contradicts every sentiment I utter, than with such tiresome animals. But I meant to speak rather of thy manner than of thy opinions. Thou art so calm, so steady—canst thou not understand me?—Santa Virgine! I wish my words came as readily as thine do!—I mean that many other people seem to fall into my own way of expressing myself: they laugh and trip about and talk nonsense when they are with me, although I know that, naturally, they are as grave as the emperor himself."

"It is the fascination of your manner, dear Donna Giulia, which extends itself over them."

"Then it must be a very tiresome and a very silly manner," exclaimed the Duchess. "But I will not believe so, thou little awkward flatterer; for I know enough of the world, and have heard enough of it, to be quite sure that my manner is not so insipid as these foolish imitators would make it appear. I only wish that we could go into the world again, and see some of the poor French captains whom the Prince of Orange has made prisoners. How didst thou like the Marquis de Saluces?—thou must have seen him often in the camp."

"Not at all, dear Duchessa."

"Not at all, dear Duchessa," repeated her friend mimicing her serious tone. "Now, thou little hypocrite, I have convicted thee: the holy Consalvo told me that thou hadst turned the head of the great leader, and now thou sayest that thou didst not see him at all. Oh, fie upon thee!"

"Not so, dear lady: I meant to say that I did not like him at all."

"And wherefore not, I should like to know? He is good looking, gallant, and has every quality that a knight should possess."

"Except truth, modesty, and religion," interposed Isidora.

"Well I only wish he had been sighing at my feet instead of thine!—he would have caused the time to move more cheerily than it did before thou camest to console me. When we go into the world again, whom thinkest thou that these cavallieri will most admire, thee or me? Trust me, I feel often jealous on the matter."

"Impossible! you do but joke, you are so very beautiful."

"Ha! ha! ha!" laughed the Duchess in her own thrilling tones. "I know that, child. I have been told it a thousand times; and, if I had not, my dear friend, the Venetian mirror, loves me too much to have kept the secret from me. But thou hast a different style of beauty; and besides, thou wilt be new to

the world ; and every novelty has its charms, and is full of dangers to us, the established idols. I declare to thee that I have some doubts upon the subject ; and would that the old Recluse or some other good judge were at hand to give an opinion. And, blessed be the saints !" she cried with renewed animation, " here comes one well able to solve the question. I will put it to him directly."

Isidora laughed at this sally of her friend and asked who was the person to whom she

that some new fancy, with which he is pleased, has beamed upon his mind. But, Santa Maria! he is turning into the other path without seeing us! What stupid people poets are before they are written down! Signor Bernardo," she cried, raising her pretty voice into louder music, "Signor Bernardo Tasso, I thought you were a person of more judgment than to follow shadows when the reality was beside you."

The poet started, and came towards them, cap in hand.

"I dreamed not of female beauty, noble lady," he said; "else should I indeed have been guilty of the folly you impute to me."

"Ha! ha! a very prettily-turned compliment, when I was doubting whether you were sufficiently awake to understand my allusion. You have proved yourself to be so; and that you are a most fitting judge to decide a question which I resolved to submit to your arbitration the moment I saw you. Now, Signor

Tasso, look well at us two ladies. You see that there is not much to complain of in the appearance of either of us : but I desire to know which of us you, as a poet long used to picture imaginary beauty, would consider the most perfect and most captivating specimen of female loveliness ?”

The lady spoke with mock gravity ; and the bard stroked his beard and paused a moment ere he replied. The pause, however, was but momentary, ere he answered, with graceful gallantry,

“ You address yourself, beautiful Duchessa, to the worst person in the world to solve such a doubt. I have, as your Grace says, been long used to picture imaginary beauty ; but never, even in its highest flights, did imagination attain to the realization of that which I now see before me. You might as well ask yonder thoughtless child”—and he pointed to one who played upon a cliff in front of a neighbouring cottage,—“ you might as well

ask yonder thoughtless child to describe the brightness of the Indies which it has never seen."

"Bravo! bravo! in truth you have well evaded the difficulty!" cried Donna Giulia. "Your late intercourse with the gallant de Saluces—for I understand that it was you who conducted the sad capitulation by which he surrendered—has imparted a spark of French amiability to your reveries."

"I had been for some time secretary, noble lady, to the Count Guido; and had, therefore, some hand in the capitulation which he conducted. I am happy the Count's own personal freedom was secured ere I left his service to enter that of the Prince of Salerno."

"A pleasant life, Signore, you poets lead!" interposed Isidora, as she perceived that the stranger was becoming too serious for her lively friend. "You pass about from court to court; and you carry with you, meanwhile, to every place an imaginary world within

your own thoughts which is as fair as you please to make it, and which consoles you in every temporary reverse."

"Pardon me, bella Signorina, that I contradict some few words in those sentiments which you express so gracefully," answered Bernardo Tasso. "Your ideas are, indeed, just when applied to those poets who reproduce only the lighter creations of the imagination: who devote their minds to the skilful structure of a sonnet or to the graceful recital of a tissue of romantic tales, such as delight your humble servant and my good friend Ludovico Ariosto. If our worldly lot is propitious, we may revel in the exuberance of fancy which prompts these pleasing nothings. But, lady, such labours are independent of the heart—of the feelings. Suppose a man really to feel, to be alive to every impulse, to every aspiration of which an immortal soul is capable; and suppose such an one to labour under adverse circumstances,

whether material or imaginary, and you will deem the keen sensibilities which constitute the poet the greatest misfortune, the greatest curse that could be inflicted upon him. No, lady; had I a son, there is no evil from which I would so earnestly pray that he should be saved as from poetic sensibilities which he should be unable to shield from the wear and tear of the world, and from poetic aspirations which he should be unable to realize. The poetic temperament and keenness of feeling would, under such circumstances, be an evil that might shake the very intellect on its invisible throne."

"Still I cannot agree with you, Signor Tasso," said Isidora. "If you will permit an uninformed girl, like me, to maintain an opinion against one so eminent, I would say that the being whom you imagine, would have all the triumph in his misfortunes which a sublime mind possesses over a degraded one. Who would wish himself to be a tree that he might escape from feeling?"

"Nonsense, carina!" exclaimed Donna Giulia. "You are both talking very sublime nonsense. And were it not so, what likelihood is there that the Signor Tasso should ever have a son capable of feeling all the grand poetic sensibilities he talks of? Such genius as his is not hereditary. But now tell me, Signor Bernardo," she continued; "tell me how you get on with the Amadigi? I hope you have thought of some more grand, romantic adventures to put into it. Do you know that, from the specimens that we have already heard of it, most of the nobility think it preferable to Ariosto's Orlando Furioso?"

"The weakness of a too favourable prejudice in my favour, bella Duchesse," interposed the poet. "Think not of comparing me to the divine Ariosto whose poem is deservedly on everybody's lips. There is not a scholar or a mechanic, neither a child, a maid, or an infirm old man who would confess that he had

only read it once over. Are not his stanzas the light, the refreshment of our life; the consolation of the weary traveller who sings them as he toils on his long and fatiguing pilgrimage? Do you not hear them sung every day through every street, through every verdant lane? But little time has elapsed since they were published by that most learned gentleman; and yet methinks that already there have been printed more editions of the Orlando Furioso than of the poems of Homer or Virgil."*

"All very true," replied the Duchesse; "but yours, Signor Bernardo, is a most charming poem. But you must give us some more wonderful adventures and love stories to keep us from going to sleep over it. Holy

* This is copied from a letter of Bernardo Tasso to Varchi which we quote in order to show the light in which poetry was beheld in those comparatively illiterate days. We speak not to the educated, but to the multitude, who think all days but their own enveiled in Cimmerian darkness—the darkness of 'the middle ages.' It must have been so—they cannot see through it.

Virgin!" she exclaimed, interrupting what she was saying, "I wish that noisy child was asleep. How strange it is that mothers ever will let their children get out of bed!"

The child to whom the poet had before pointed while illustrating what he was saying at the time, was now, in truth, making that use of his lungs which so often appears to be superhuman. It had been tottering and toddling about the ledge of rock; and at length, as a matter of course, fell down from one shelf of stone to another two feet beneath it; and immediately, also as a matter of course, set up that obstreperous howl to which Donna Giulia had alluded. Isidora ran towards it: and the mother, also, rushed out of the cottage and caught it up in her arms. The child was not hurt; so that then began, on the part of the affectionate parent, that string of eloquence which matrons, of her class, generally lavish upon their offspring on such occasions.

"Thou little nasty troublesome brat!" she cried striking it with the flat of her hand. "What business hadst thou to go so far from the door and to tumble down and frighten the noble Signorina? Barbarossa will come and take thee one of these days, to cut short thy ramblings!"

At the mention of that dreaded name, the shrieks of the urchin were redoubled with angry fury.

"Barba, no! Cecco not go with Barbarossa!" he roared.

"Thou shalt, thou noisy varlet!" reiterated the woman. "Barbarossa shall carry thee away, and make a slave of thee."

"Do not frighten the poor child, my good woman," said Isidora quietly: "he is terrified enough already to make him remember that ledge of rock. Who art thou?"

"Ninetta Aniello, the wife of him they call Massaniello, per servirla," answered the woman curtsying humbly.

"Indeed!" said Isidora. "I am beholden to thy husband for some service. Be kind to the boy; and tell thy husband that when he has taken a good draught of fish, if he will bring them up to the Palazzetto, I will speak to the Duchessa that she should order her Major-Duomo to deal with him."

The poor woman poured forth her thanks, and Isidora rejoined her friend. She found that the poet had already been dismissed: and as she again took her arm, Donna Giulia exclaimed to her in a bantering tone, "Dost thou know that I take all these remarks upon Barbarossa as affronts to myself personally? Wherefore should the poor corsair be held up as a bugbear to frighten naughty children because he has a red beard? I suppose when he gets knocked on the head, or drowned, or shot, that, for want of some other horror, they will begin to threaten them with Donna Giulia!"

"That is, indeed, an amusing idea!" exclaimed Isidora laughing.

"Amusing, is it, thou malicious little imp!" exclaimed the Duchess. "Think how, in my place, thou wouldst like to hear women call out to their children—'Do as I bid thee, ere the Testarossa come upon thee!' Beware of the Testarossa, of the Redhead, Donna Giulia!"

"None but you, dear Duchessa, would pretend to prize so lightly those beautiful golden tresses—"

"I do not prize them lightly, I assure thee," exclaimed the lady interrupting her. "I know, on the contrary, how distinguished they always look amongst black polls like thine. They draw the attention of people towards me; that is the great point. She must, indeed, be little of a woman who cannot rivet attention when she has once attracted it. But in my case," she added laughing, "I have never found that people were very anxious to turn their eyes away again."

"Indeed they must be unworthy to possess eye-sight who would do so," answered her friend. "And indeed, dear Donna Giulia, I should like to witness the homage which you receive in the world. I have only seen you in private; but I have been told by the Count of Procida—"

"By whom, child!" exclaimed the Duchess in surprise.

"By the Count of Procida," answered Isidora timidly: "did you not know—"

"Know what, carina?" asked the widow stopping and gazing into the full brown eyes of her young friend. "I know Alfonso of Procida well: but I knew not that thou wast acquainted with him."

"I thought the holy Consalvo had told you all," said Isidora blushing to her beautiful temples, while those large eyes became suffused with tears beneath the steady, and yet smiling and malicious, gaze of the Duchess.

"Oh I am so glad!" cried the latter clapping her hands and jumping where she stood for glee. "I am so glad! Here is a mystery, and a love story, and I know not what; better than any old Signor Tasso could have told us! Sit down here, carina, on this moss-grown rock; sit down here directly, and do, do tell me all about it. How charming this is!"

Almost by force, she pulled Isidora down upon the rustic seat, and seating herself beside her, took hold of both her hands and urged her to begin. Seeing, however, that her visitor was really affected and agitated, her lightsome manner gradually gave way to one more kind and sympathising. The first feeling of shyness overcome, Isidora had no unwillingness to declare all to her friend: and she must, indeed, have been endowed with extraordinary powers of refusal could she have evaded all the questions and cross-questions which the Duchess put to her for the more

complete elucidation of the story. Gradually, therefore, she made herself acquainted with the whole eventful history, and with the engagement that existed between the parties, subject to the condition which the old Recluse had imposed.

"Oh this is charming!" she again and again exclaimed when she had learnt all. "I know and love Alfonso well, and am delighted with the prospect. I wonder who the holy Consalvo can be, that he should take so much interest in thee, carina, and impose such a condition on your marriage! By-the-bye, this villa ought to belong to the Count: but I will never restore it to him! At least not for a great, great while, that I may see how prettily you will go on making love to one another. Oh, it will be an epic poem! and then, when you are both at the point of death, I will come magnanimously forward, like a mighty enchantress, and say, 'I restore Amalfi to ye: live and love!' What a beau-

tiful history it will make! I will tell the Signor Tasso all about it, that he may put it in his poem."

In this strain, she ran on with her usual thoughtless volubility. Isidora, however, well understood her temper; and attached no more importance to her words than they really deserved. She felt that the beautiful Duchess, with all her prettily-expressed vanity, had a kind and considerate heart: and she believed that she had secured in her a firm friend, as well as a sympathising confidante. Indeed she had often wondered that she had never before alluded to a matter which had ever been so present to her own thoughts: that silence was now explained: the Recluse had not told the history of her whom he introduced to the friendly mansion of the widow. Henceforward, they would look upon one another not only as friends, but as dear and near relatives; and Isidora enjoyed the satisfaction of hearing the Duchess

speaking of her betrothed in terms of admiration that were most soothing to her feelings.

"Indeed, love, to tell thee the truth," she said, "I had some thoughts of asking him to marry me, so soon as this horrid mourning should be over. Thou knowest that a woman can always ask a man to marry her, if she knows how to set about it. There is a way of saying every-thing. But now I must look out for some one else. I told thee that I should have cause to be jealous of thee: and thou hast given it to me already. However, it is but once: for I think thy poor little silly heart will always be satisfied with one cavalier; and will leave me to work my will upon all others."

An affectionate pressure of the arms, that each wove round the waist of the other, declared to both that their sentiments were understood and appreciated. Then, as the evening was coming on, the two ladies rose

from the ledge of rock on which they had been seated and began to walk briskly homewards. Passing round a buttress of rock, they came upon two men who were seated beyond it, and who were speaking in rather raised tones.

"Well, well!" exclaimed one in a tone of reiteration; "I shall wait no man's time. I have collected some able fellows—escaped prisoners like myself; double-faced villains like thee; and the devil knows what beside: they lie in the cavern: a few more, and then I shall seize a vessel and put to sea at once; I am weary of skulking on shore."

The two men started to their feet as they beheld the ladies, who recognised, with some surprise, Bernardo Accorto in one of them. The other wore the common dress of the fishermen of the country. The Duchess signed to Bernardo to follow her and her friend; and without harbouring a suspicious

thought of any kind, for she had only imperfectly heard the last words of the dialogue, she enquired who was his comrade.

"A mariner of Genoa, illustrissima Signora," he answered. "He was telling me how his boat had been destroyed during the siege, and how the builder, who is making a new one for him, had told him that it would soon be ready to put to sea. He hates the shore, like all these sailors. But the loss of his vessel was a great source of suffering to the poor fellow, who has had no regular means of earning his livelihood: and I was about to tell him that I doubted not your Signorina would do something for him."

"Enough," answered Donna Giulia: "follow thou us. The evening is coming on and the times are not so tranquil as they have been. Thou shalt take a trifle to thy friend to-morrow."

That friend was the corsair, Sinan.

Without a thought of the danger they had escaped the two ladies continued their walk ; and reached their home in safety at the hour of their cheerful evening meal.

CHAPTER VIII.

SOLITUDE.

O quid solutis est beatius curis?

beamed over the earth in renovated smiles : and the Count of Procida had, at length, overcome all those underhand influences by which his fellow - prisoner, del Vasto, had striven to prolong the detention of a claimant to his newly-acquired lands. The Marquis himself had been long-since liberated ; at the time, indeed, when Andrew Doria had passed over to the service of their then common master. For it is unnecessary to record that the Emperor had hastened this event by every means in his power. All the conditions proposed by the Genoese Admiral had been readily accorded ; and the latter had, with his usual activity, bent him to the furtherance of all his new master's and his own designs. Naples, as we have said, had been liberated, and the Imperial power re-established in Italy. The French had been driven out of Genoa and Savona : and the port of the latter place had been choked up and destroyed to appease the patriotic fears of the former city. Here the

Admiral had been received as the Liberator of his country; and, with a magnanimity which succeeding ages have ever praised, had renounced all claim to superior power, and had established the freedom of the republic upon a foundation which endured until these latter years.

The fickleness of the King of France had, indeed, sacrificed every object for which he had commenced the war; and a peace, dishonourable to him, was about to be concluded which should embrace all Christendom and give leisure to the more fortunate Emperor to turn his thoughts and his designs elsewhere.

The fair Duchess of Palliano reclined upon a couch in the apartment which we have before described. Her posture enabled her to overlook the bay of Salerno from the three large windows of the room. That bay glistened beneath the slanting rays of the evening sun. The lady sighed heavily, but it seemed to be rather a sigh of restlessness than

of sorrow. She twisted her golden locks through her long slender fingers; she beat her little foot upon the brocaded cushion on which it rested, and marked it with a glance of satisfaction as it rose and fell to the measures of some unspoken harmony. Anon she smiled again; and, placing herself more comfortably on the sofa, she let fall their dark fringe over her full blue eyes and seemed to compose herself to sleep. For a while, she lay motionless: but it was evident that sleep came not to her bidding. At length, she started from the couch, and went quickly to the window.

"This place is getting terribly tiresome!" she exclaimed. "Unless something happens to arouse me, I shall be wearied to death. To think of having lived here for months, and of having scarcely seen a soul the while! I marvel what detains Isidora so long! Oimé! Oimé!—and à propos of ennui, as the French say, I will sing the new song about it."

She fetched her guitar or lute from the marble 'consol on which it lay; and seating herself at the open window, sang the following words to a lively, but serio-comic, air:—

Oimé! Oimé! They may sing of the trees;
They may sing of the freshness that's borne on the breeze;
They may sing of the tints of the new-budding spring—
But when no one is near us, what 'vails it to sing?
Wherefore sing when there's no one to listen, I pray?—
'Tis but wasting one's sweetness. Oimé! Oimé!

Oimé! Oimé!—Would the trees deck them out
In leaves if no birds hopped their branches about?
Would the breeze fondly sigh o'er hill, garden or bowers
If it could not disport with the languishing flowers?
And the birds on the boughs, tell me, what would they say,
Were each bird all alone, but—oimé! oimé!

Oimé! Oimé!—It is folly to sing
Or to strike an accord all alone with a string.
Music is but the voice of the soul; and 'twere vain
For the poor soul to speak nor be answered again.
Then be silent, my lute; not a note will I play
When there's no one to hear me:—Oimé! Oimé!

“The most sensible song I have heard this long while!” she exclaimed yawning, as she

struck a few disconnected notes upon the instrument. Isidora de' Massimi entered the room.

"Singing! dear Donna Giulia," she exclaimed. "I am delighted to see that you have forgotten your fit of melancholy *secatura*."

"I have not forgotten it, by any means, dear," answered the Duchess. "But I be-thought me of that song about the charms of being alone that thou dost so much vaunt, and I have been singing it to console me: Oimé! Oimé!"

"Oh that one, was it?" said the friend. "I was in hopes it was the other song, which I so much prefer, on the same subject."

"Heaven forbid, carina, that I should sing thy song!" exclaimed Donna Giulia starting up and placing the lute in the hands of the orphan. "Particularly such a magnificent piece of music as thou dost deem it to be. Neither my voice, nor my comprehension, nor

my tastes, nor anything else about me, could compass aught so sublime. Sing it, however, sweet one. I like to hear it in that full rich voice of thine. Sing it, and I will strive not to go to sleep."

In a voice which the Duchess had truly described, a full rich voice which, however, owed all its charms to itself, for she had received no instruction save that which Donna Giulia had herself bestowed to wile away the tedious hours, Isidora sang the following stanzas—or rather, we should say, words to the same effect:—

No, I'm never alone. "Though no friend sit beside,
Sweet converse I hold, gentle whispers exchange.
My soul springs to all I behold far and wide,
And thought awakes thought in its limitless range.
All earth, sea and sky the same sympathies own,
And I ask and I hear, and I'm never alone.

Oh I'm never alone: for I ask of the earth
Wherefore blend ye such richness and beauty and gloom?
And it answers "I smile as the land of thy birth,
And I frown and I mourn as the land of thy tomb.
I spread out a feast and I spread out a pall;
Let my loveliness cheer thee, my grandeur appal.

Oh I'm never alone. When I gaze on the sea,
When I gaze on the stars and the heavens above,
Oh surely they all smile responsive on me,
And they speak to my heart and they fill it with love.
And they say "Behold God in all nature is shown ;
If so bright be His footstool, think what is His throne !"

"It is all very well for thee who hast a heart full of love for Alfonso," said the Duchess kissing her fair cheek affectionately : "but my heart is empty, a perfect void ; so that I do not see and hear all these fine things that the songster talks about. But now tell me, carina, wherefore thou hast dressed thyself out with this unusual care ? One would think that thou didst expect a visit from thy betrothed, and hadst prepared thee to reclaim his truant heart."

"I do feel," answered Isidora blushing and laughing, "I do feel, in truth, as though some one were coming to us this afternoon. Have you never felt this, dear Duchessa ?"

"Yes, I have, dear Signorina, if thou dost prefer to be treated so formally"—

Isidora interrupted her by placing her two hands upon the shoulders of her friend and kissing her lips.

"Well then," continued Donna Giulia, "I own that I have felt such presentiments as thou dost describe. And, perchance, even my very restlessness to-day may be a symptom of a change. Heaven grant that it may be so! Only I fear that, whoever may be coming, he or she must be an awfully tiresome personage if he is heralded in by the ennui that has brooded over me. I have had serious thoughts of setting fire to the house in order to occasion some variety and excitement. How gravely thou dost receive the suggestion! But ha! ha! ha! I bethink me now of the reason:—the property must be recovered before a certain Count and a certain young lady can wed: and the destruction of the house might become an insuperable impediment. Ha! ha! ha! I will set fire to it this very night."

The dogs were now heard barking loudly in

the court of the palazzetto :—for, however times and fashions and rulers may change, dogs always have been and always will be the trusted companions, the unbought guardians of man. A trampling of steeds was heard amid the clamour.

“Joy! joy!” exclaimed Donna Giulia clapping her hands with delight, “some one is coming! Some one is coming! Some one is really coming!”

“It cannot be him,” remarked Isidora in a disappointed tone. “I hear the tramp of horses. He used always to come on foot.”

“Never heed, child, who it is,” said her friend, “so that it be some one to break this dull monotony.”

The sound of the horses’ feet, the barking of the dogs, subsided: and a domestic entering announced a visit from the Conte di Procida.

Alfonso followed him closely, and advanced rapidly to the spot where the Duchess stood with her arm entwined in that of Isidora—

thus affording an imperceptible support which, with intuitive delicacy, she felt that the other might need.

“At length, at length, I have the happiness of kissing your beautiful hands!” Alfonso exclaimed as he suited the action to the word with something of a constrained gallantry which the double presence occasioned. Had the duchess been alone, his manner to her would, indeed, have been more formal; had Isidora been alone his manner to her would have been——very different:

—— *L'uno al sen mi stringera,*

L'altro, l'altro—ah! che fara.

As it was, the presence of one threw a chill, while that of the other threw a warmth, over his address to each. But the gentle pressure with which Isidora returned the trembling and lingering touch of his hand, as he bore her own to his lips, at once assured him that all was right in that quarter: and Donna Giulia, partly to conceal the agitation of her friend,

and partly from the exuberance of her own character, immediately assailed him with a flow of words which, proving to him that his presence was most welcome, set him at ease with both ladies.

"It is him!" she said. "It is really him:—come hither upon a whole squadron of horses to take by storm this poor castle to which we know that he sets up some claim. But we capitulate, Signor Conte; we capitulate gladly. We have suffered so long a siege from that most wicked enemy, Ennui, that we can hold out no longer. Only be merciful, as you are victorious. I know not how old Andrew Doria may have treated you; but do not, in pity do not condemn us to solitary confinement! We have expiated that part of our suffering already; and were just wishing that you or some other gallant knight would come to our relief."

"Is this, indeed, true? May I trust that I was thought of in my absence?" asked

Alfonso looking with his eyes at the Duchess while he felt that he was looking at Isidora only.

"True!" asserted the former: "most surely it is. Only Isidora said that it could not be you, because, as you always used to visit her on foot, you would come out to the hills of Amalfi like a poor pilgrim visiting some beauteous shrine."

"In the streets of Naples," said Alfonso, "where I had first the joy of becoming acquainted with the Signorina de—"

"Nonsense!" interrupted Donna Giulia. "Do you mean to say that you address her as the 'Signorina' when you speak to her alone? I will never believe that you are a couple of such pretty innocents! Talk to her now as you would if I were not present. I know all about it: and I flatter myself that I do not look like a very severe old Duenna?"

"Donna Giulia of Gonzaga can look like

no other than her own bewitching self," answered Alfonso. "But I am so overpowered by your kindness that I can scarcely find words to convey my meaning:—my feelings I could never declare."

"Declare to us, at least, how you broke through the bounds of your prison-house or prison-ship, which ever it was: and how you found out that we—or, at least that Isidora was living here. It is very sad to have another more admired and sought after than one's-self!" she said with an air of pretended pique. "I knew it would come to this!"

"I should have sought you out, dear ladies, long ago," replied the Count; "but that I was left a prisoner by the machinations, as I suspect, of the Marquis del Vasto, who recommended to the Genoese Admiral to detain me long after he had obtained his own freedom. However, I was able, at length, to make a friend of the old Admiral by the help of the Hunchback, Giustiniano;

and he not only set me at large, but also enabled me to mount myself and a couple of followers that I might journey hither in safety. I called in the Via Carbonara to enquire for Isidora, and I was delighted to find that she was here with my good and fair kinswoman."

"A most concise and intelligible story," observed Donna Giulia. "And as you can have nothing more to say, and as I have heard all Isidora's chatter for some months

conds upon the beaming face of the other and then upon the trembling stars—not more bright than the eyes of each—which appeared to look down approvingly upon their true affection.

“This is, indeed, happiness!” exclaimed Alfonso. “To return after so long an absence and to find thee still the same!”

“Nay, Alfonso, how could I change?” asked Isidora fondly. “But hast thou thyself ever remembered the poor friendless orphan?”

“Ever remembered thee, dearest? Thou canst not doubt me. Thou must know how impossible it is for one to see thee without loving thee. Remember what the holy Recluse said when he first joined our hands. ‘Thou must love her,’ he said: ‘it is impossible that thou canst look upon one so beautiful without loving her.’ He spoke the truth, Isidora: and he who has loved thee once can never cease to love thee.”

"I thank thee, dear one, for this assurance," replied the fond girl taking his hand in hers. "It has been a long and weary absence, and thy Isidora has been sorely tried—not in her faith, that could never waver. But my heart still told me that thou wouldst return and that all would again be well. Even this very day, I had a presentiment that thou wouldst be restored to me: I told Giulia of it, and she charged me with having attired myself to receive

—yet will I say, my beloved, that thy brightness would take the lustre out of the richest brocade; and that thou art now, if possible, more fair than when I last parted from thee. Added months, and health and the fresh air of these mountains, have given an elastic transparency to thy look—a roundness to thy exquisite figure—”

Alfonso interrupted himself and started; and we may presume that his hand had sought the waist of his betrothed, as he suddenly bent his head and gazed through the darkening twilight upon the jewelled chain that encircled it.

“It is so!” he exclaimed at length in astonishment. “For the love of the Madonna, tell me how you came by that chain.”

Isidora blushed and looked momentarily confused by the sudden question, as she remembered that the silent Captain Schertel had given to her, doubtless as a pledge of his affection, the jewel which she had almost

constantly worn since then to relieve the simplicity of her attire and to supply the place of other trinkets—for it was the only ornament she possessed.

“The chain?” she said with some hesitation. “Hast thou ever seen it before?”

“It was my own—my father’s—a family relic: which, in my extremest need, Bernardo sold, or stole, or gave away from me.”

Isidora’s confusion encreased at witnessing the eagerness of her lover. She paused

awhile to reflect. She saw at once the

the precious jewel for thee ! But it was once a source of annoyance to me. For, indeed, I have been so pestered with admirers, as they called themselves, that I often regretted the seclusion in which I lived until I knew thee and my heart awoke. Thine were the first words of praise I ever heard : and think how revolting the language of others must have been to one whose heart had once learned to dwell upon thy dear avowals ! There was a great stupid Captain Schertel—”

“The robber ! surely he did not dare—” interposed Alfonso angrily.

“He was ever most humble and submissive, —even most ridiculously so,” continued Isidora smiling. “Thou hast no need to think of him, unless thou wilt spare a prayer for his poor soul. It was, however, this man who brought me the jewel on the day before I was delivered from him by the holy Consalvo Berretta. Where or how he became possessed of it, I know not. But thou

mayest well believe that I have not worn it out of regard to him. But, as it was never rightfully his to bestow, do thou take it back again, dear Alfonso," she said unclasping the cincture. "A family relic should not leave thy hands."

"I am, indeed, glad to receive it again," answered the Count; "but that which thou dost possess can never be estranged from me. Receive it then once more, sweet one," he continued as he passed it again over her throbbing heart, "receive it from my hands, and forget that it was ever bestowed upon thee by the villain, Schertel."

"Forget the valiant Captain Schertel!" exclaimed Donna Giulia re-entering the room as he spoke the last words. "Be not so severely jealous, Count Alfonso, I pray thee. The only little entertainment we have known in this dull place has been in laughing at him and his suit—for Isidora would not laugh at the noble de Saluces; and I could only think

of him with regret that I was not in her place that I might have bantered him and led him on, instead of driving the gallant knight to despair as this little prude did."

"De Saluces!" exclaimed Alfonso.

"Ha! ha! she has not told you about him, has she?" cried the Duchess. "I wish I had time to make you as jealously mad as Orlando. But they say that the gallant knight is either dead or dying; and supper awaits us in the hall. Come then, and let us forget all past disasters while you tell us what is going on in the world below."

With lightsome talk and happy hearts, they passed into the neighbouring hall, where a bright and elegant supper was prepared, such as might have done credit to the genius of Floriante. Fish and fowl and fruits were there disguised and blended together by every attractive and stimulating process. Rich wines glowed in crystal vases or steamed from the massive workmanship of Benvenuto

Cellini and his envious fellow-craftsmen. For a time, the conversation was carried on in a discursive and bantering tone; while the arch curl of the lip or the deep-seated expression of the eye gave a point and meaning to every phrase far beyond that which the words themselves conveyed. Nor were those gestures, for which the Neapolitans have ever been so renowned, wanting to animate this scene of southern social enjoyment: quick and graceful, they served as a running commentary to all that was said; so that a stranger might have doubted whether the words were only introduced as an explanation of the pantomime or whether the pantomime was meant to explain the spoken language.

“But, Cousin Alfonso,” exclaimed the Duchess as the repast at length drew to a close, “thou hast not yet told us anything about our new lord and master—for it seems that the Emperor’s authority is now too firmly established in Italy to be ever again

disputed. Where is he? What is he doing? What sort of a man is he?"

"Of your three questions, fair Donna Giulia, I suspect that you would prefer that I should first answer that which you place last. The Emperor is a handsome and graceful young man with pleasing and knightly manners."

"A young man! Pleasing manners?" cried the two ladies at once. "Impossible!" continued the Duchess. "All Italy looks upon him as a severe and sour-visaged soldier:—a monster cased in iron and battering the globe with his battle-axe and club."

"He who could make war upon the Holy Father and imprison him so long in his city while his troops laid waste with fire and sword the venerable town of Rome, the seat of Saint Peter, can be little better than a barbarian like the Huns and Goths who despoiled Italy of old," continued Isidora in a more serious tone of surprise

"Yet is he far different from the pictures which you both draw of him," replied Alfonso. "He is, indeed, a most wonderful man; thoughtful; cool; crafty, I fear me, beyond his years. But, bella Duchessa, you will shortly be able to form your own opinion of him. He is, even now, on his voyage to Italy!"

"Coming to Italy!" cried the lady.

"Even so," answered Alfonso. "He is coming to receive the Imperial crown from the hands of his Holiness, the Pope, at

"Surely, dear Giulia, thou wouldst not go so far?" said Isidora in a tone of remonstrance.

"Not go so far!" answered the other: "that I would, were it twice the distance! Bethink thee what would the ceremonies be if Donna Giulia of Gonzaga were not there! Bethink thee of the disappointment of all the great lords, who will have come so far, if they do not see me! Yes, yes: in pity to the world, I must be there; and thou shalt go, also, and see the festivities. We have hid ourselves long enough in solitude."

"I doubt," observed the Count of Procida, "I doubt whether there will be as many festivities as you imagine, my fair cousin. I suspect that the Emperor's visit is more connected with affairs of government than with courtly pomp. He has many things to settle respecting the future government of Italy. He and the Pope can scarcely be very good friends as yet: the sovereignty of the Duke-

dom of Milan is still undetermined: he has also to take order with his Holiness respecting this new pestilent German heresy"—

"Not a word again the Signor Luther!" exclaimed the Duchess. "Isidora is tender on the subject: the brave Captain Schertel was one of his followers."

"There is but the more need to pray for his soul," said Isidora gently.

"It is also said," continued Alfonso, "that the Emperor is planning an expedition against the corsairs of Barbary who infest all the Mediterranean seas and keep the shores of Spain and Italy in such a constant state of alarm. The audacity of this Barbarossa has risen to such a height as to call for signal chastisement. Truly he insults the dignity of the Emperor and the majesty of our holy religion and of all Christendom."

"Who," asked Isidora, "who is this Barbarossa of whom we hear so much? I wish there could be little books published, once a

month or so, to tell us what is going on in the world, and who are all the great people who rise and fall like leaves upon the trees."

"Once a month!" exclaimed the Duchess, "say once a week rather. What a charming thing it would be! Then we should know what all our friends are doing! and who is dead! and who is married! and what tournaments are given, and who wins the prizes! We might then even live at Amalfi with some comfort! However, clever men are so stupid that they will never hit upon so brilliant an idea or do anything so useful! So tell us, as well as thou mayest, all about my namesake Barbarossa."

She playfully touched her own red hair as she spoke, and all three laughed gaily as Alfonso began as follows:

"About fifteen years ago," he said, "there were a couple of brothers, sons of a poor and, for aught I know, an honest, mechanic in one of the Turkish islands. These lads were too

idle to follow their father's trade; and ran away from him and joined a little crew of common pirates. They were soon noted for their skill and valour; and their fellows having chosen them as their leaders, Barbarossa, the elder brother, seized upon a small brigantine, and was so successful in all his undertakings that he gradually assembled a fleet of several galleys."

"But is his beard really red?" asked the Duchess.

they made into the ports of Barbary which belonged to several little infidel princes—native Africans or Moors expelled from Spain. These barbarians gladly traded with the pirates, who came by their property too easily to attach much value to it. The kings of Spain had a little establishment on the coast, named Oran, which one of the kings of Algiers had endeavoured, several times, to gain possession of. Being unable to do so with his irregular native troops, he applied to Barbarossa to assist him. The Corsair wished for nothing better. He left his brother with the fleet, and marched, with an army of five thousand men, to aid the Arabs. Having once obtained a footing in Algiers, Barbarossa was not likely to relinquish it. He murdered the prince whom he had come to assist, and made the Algerines receive him as their King in his stead.

For a while nothing could be more prosperous than his reign. But having encreased

his piratical excursions on the coast of Spain to an extent which aroused all the vengeance of the Emperor, he was attacked by the Spanish troops, belonging to the little fortress I spoke of, and was slain in battle."

"Santa Maria!" exclaimed the Duchess; "but if Barbarossa was killed, how can there be a Barbarossa now?"

"His brother, *bella Signora mia*, succeeded him; and has, thus far, shown himself even more formidable and more fortunate. He conquered the greater part of the coast of Barbary from the native princes: and secured the protection of the great Soleyman, the powerful Emperor of the Turks, by offering to hold the country as his vassal. The Sultan was well-pleased to recover those rich territories which the Turks had once conquered, and sent troops to assist him in all his undertakings: and, at length, gave him the command of his own mighty fleet, as he could find no one else of sufficient skill to

compete with the gallant Doria. Thus was the fame of Barbarossa more widely extended than ever."

"Then he took his brother's name, did he?"

"He did. It was already a name of terror, nor has become less so since he bears it."

"But, Alfonso, you have spoken only of Algiers," said Isidora. "But I have heard most people mention a place called Tunigi, as being the country of this dreadful man."

"It is so, at present, *anima mia*," answered the Count. "And I will relate the strange manner in which it became so; as I have heard it from the Corsair king's only real opponent, Andrew Doria. When Barbarossa went to Constantinople to take the command of the Turkish Emperor's fleet, he showed himself to be as good a courtier as he had ever been known a valiant commander. He quite gained the confidence of the Sultan. The last King of Tunis had thirty-four sons"—

"Thirty-four sons!"—exclaimed Donna

Giulia lifting up her hands in horror.
"Thirty-four sons, besides daughters, doubtless! Were she not an infidel, I would say may the Madonna have pity on the poor woman who bore them!"

"They were the children of different mothers," answered Alfonso laughing.
"Those infidels marry as many wives as they please."

"So old Theresa told me," said Isidora;
"and that this Luthero, and the followers of

"One of the brothers escaped," continued Alfonso, "and fled to Barbarossa for assistance. This the pirate king readily granted. He persuaded the young man to accompany him to Constantinople to implore the favour of the Great Soleyman. But, as I have said, he himself was so good a courtier that he persuaded that wicked emperor to enter into all his own views. They together equipped a large fleet to support the rights of the fugitive prince: this, at least, was the report they gave out; and a large party of the people of Tunis rose in arms and declared for him instead of his cruel and weak-minded brother. By their help, Barbarossa soon made himself master of the town and country. Muley-Hassan, the usurper, was driven out of the kingdom, and all the people expected to see the elder brother and to hear him proclaimed king over them."

"Now, holy Virgin!" exclaimed the Duchess, "I dare answer for it that we are going to hear of some new treachery!"

“Even so, dear ladies,” answered their informant. “Barbarossa and the Sultan had only used the name of the elder brother to mask their designs. He had been detained a prisoner at Constantinople, and has never been heard of since. The Emperor Soleyman was proclaimed sovereign of Tunis, and Barbarossa has, ever since, reigned there as his viceroy.”

“Thy story is like one of the romances of the poets,” observed Giulia. “But in very

tine that was seized last winter in the roads of Salerno by some unknown pirates," said Isidora. "I doubt not that they must have been followers of this terrible man!"

"They could hardly be so," replied the Duchess; "because the men who seized the vessel were in an open boat of these shores. I think it more likely that they were lawless Neapolitans."

"Such outrages have yearly increased," said the Count, "and the Emperor Charles has been wearied with the complaints of his subjects. The fugitive and murderous prince, whom Barbarossa drove out of Tunis, has also been to his court to pray for his assistance: and it is thought that, if he undertakes this expedition, the African barbarians will prefer even Muley-Hassan to the usurpation of Soleyman and his viceroy."

"Nay Barbarossa is, at all events, a noble and high-spirited knight," said the Duchess:

"or, at least, he would be so were he a Christian prince."

"In faith, fair cousin," said Alfonso laughing, "you seem to admire him so much that I esteem it almost a pity that his corsairs have never had the fortune to seize your beautiful person and carry you as a prize to his mightiness."

"Do you know," answered the light-hearted, thoughtless woman, "that I should not have been sorry for it yesterday! I would have

murders, and corsairs, and moors with thirty-four sons."

The party separated for the night, full of affection and renovated hope.

CHAPTER IX.

THE HOLY HOUSE OF LORETTO.

Huc cum domo advenisti
Ut pia mater Christi
Dispensares gratiam.
Nazarethum tibi ortus

ennet, the gift of de Saluces, which had borne
er to that lady's hospitable roof. Alfonso
ode beside them on his charger, fully armed,
excepting that some of the troopers whom the
still troubled state of the country and the
stately usages of the times rendered necessary
as an escort—bore his helmet, his lance, and
is shield. Sumpter mules, well laden with all
at could add to the comfort of the journey
d with the baggage of the party, swelled
cavalcade:—amongst these, together with
er attendants, were Bernardo and Osmanna:
one engrossed by thoughts too dark and
olved to be expressed; the other chattering
d laughing in the glee of her heart, and
ibiting a childish delight at the journey
d an honest love for her companion, which
parted real beauty to her broad rustic
atures, and made the beholder sympathise
ith the simple and joyful heart within her
reast.

It was a long journey to undertake on

horseback : but it could not have been in any way accomplished in the jolting conveyances of those days ; for although coaches then existed, springs were unknown. These were the production of a later age, when fiacres, suspended from the perch which passed over the roof of the carriage, were invented to carry invalids and pilgrims to the shrine of Saint Fiaker—an Irish hermit, the place of whose burial, in France, drew crowds to pray for those miraculous cures which were said to be wrought through his intercession.

Neither were there, in the days of which we write, inns and hostelleries suited to the reception of travellers of any distinction. But Donna Giulia looked upon her journey as a pleasurable excursion in which she would pass from convent to castle and visit all the wide connexions of her own family of Gonzaga and of the Colonnas of her late husband. All these were now triumphing in the possession of estates and castles wrested, from their here-

ditary owners, by the Prince of Orange, and bestowed upon the adherents of the Spanish faction. In vain did the ancient nobility of Melfi, of Venafro, of Atri, of Somma, of Bojano, and of almost every district worth confiscating, allege the letters of the former Viceroy which permitted them to hoist the French colours where they found that the Spaniards could no longer defend them: those letters availed them not with the needy gambler of Orange. Those who fell into his hands were immediately beheaded: those who were able to escape from the kingdom, thought themselves fortunate in saving their lives with the loss of their property.

Donna Giulia, however, was of the party of the conquerors; and her journey was a triumphant ride from castle to castle—a visit of congratulation to the intruders upon the noble spoils which had fallen to the lot of each. That she might become acquainted with these new possessions of her friends, she

had elected to avoid Rome, where indeed a Colonna could not, with propriety, appear: and to journey along the coast of the Adriatic: which, having been the first scene of de Launec's triumph, was now recommended as having offered more to the despoiler than could be wrested from the nobility of any other part of the kingdom.

When our travellers entered the papal territory, religious houses more frequently afforded them that shelter which they could no longer

in which accommodation had been prepared for them. A hasty change of their attire—hasty, we mean, for those days, when ladies decked them out in a style different from that of their waiting-maids—a hasty change of their attire prepared them to appear at the hospitable supper-table of the worthy prelate and to do justice to the fare spread out upon it. A canon and a chaplain or two were silent partakers of the meal: but Donna Giulia was delighted to find it enlivened, beyond her expectations, by the presence of three strangers who were described to her, by their host, as noble followers of the court of Rome and chamberlains of his present Holiness, who were now on their return from a distant excursion undertaken with a view to elucidate some matters connected with the Santa Casa—the holy house of Loretto.

“To elucidate some mystery, Signori?” exclaimed the Duchess. “I hope it was to discover by what means the holy mansion was

borne hither through the air. Pray explain it to us, that, after we shall have paid our vows to the holy shrine to-morrow, we may exchange our ambling mules for the same easy mode of conveyance. In very deed, I begin to be impatient to arrive at our journey's end."

"Take care," said the Bishop smiling with good-natured forbearance at her petulancy, "take care lest your vows should be accepted and you should be kept in suspense as many years, ere you arrive at the court of Bologna, as was this revered relic ere it was finally settled upon our favoured shores."

The ladies expressed themselves ignorant of the delays and uncertainties to which the bishop alluded; and an animated conversation ensued in which he and the apostolical commissioners or chamberlains, bore a part with a half-serious, half-jocular, amenity. Such, in fact, was the only tone in which sensible men, employed to uphold the alleged miracle,

could allude to their own secret convictions on a matter of evidence respecting which the majority had little doubt. In the course of this friendly discussion, our travellers learned more of the alleged history of the Casa Santa than they had ever before known: and while Alfonso looked grave and incredulous, and Isidora pained and thoughtful, Donna Giulia lifted up her hands in wonder, and laughed and cried by turns, as different portions of the recital affected her thoughtless and easily-swayed temperament.

“Holy Virgin!” she exclaimed devoutly crossing herself, while a tear, the evidence of lightly-moved internal pious feeling, started to her full blue eye; “Holy Virgin and was it really so? The blessed Saint Helen, you say Signore, discovered this holy cottage in Nazareth three hundred years after the death of the Madonna, and built a stately church over it!”

“Yes, Signora Duchessa,” interposed the

youngest of the papal commissioners: "and more than two hundred years after the town had been totally destroyed by the Romans. Does not that add to the miracle?"

"But, your reverence," suggested Isidora timidly addressing the Bishop, "a miracle is pre-supposed which would as easily account for all this as for other matters."

"Santa Maria, nobody doubts the miracle, carina!" exclaimed the Duchess; "but I pray you to tell me, Signori Cavallieri, how the blessed cottage arrived hither:—I mean how and when it did really arrive. We all know that it was carried through the air by angels."

A perceptible smile passed over the countenance of every person present; and the Bishop answered "That event, noble lady, occurred about two hundred years ago, when the Egyptian Caliphs conquered Syria and destroyed the church built by Saint Helen; without, wonderful to relate! without de-

stroying the holy cottage that was enshrined beneath its dome. That cottage was then brought nearer to the faith of Christians, and suddenly appeared seated on a promontory on the opposite coast of the Adriatic, in Dalmatia."

"In Dalmatia!" exclaimed both ladies at once.

"Then in truth, ladies," continued the prelate, "commenced those wanderings to which I alluded when I cautioned your Signoria not to seek to exchange your sure-footed horses for the irregular movements of the bearers of the Holy House of Loretto. The poor people of the country of Tersatto, where it was first seated, deemed themselves as highly favoured as we of Loretto now do; although they appear not to have greeted the strange apparition with an undoubting devotion. They persuaded the governor of the province to send a deputation to Nazareth to ascertain whether the original cottage had

really disappeared from those lands ; and if so, whether any vestiges of the foundations remained which they might compare with the walls of the building lately wafted among themselves. The deputation took all the admeasurements of the latter ; proceeded to the Holy Land ; and having ascertained that the holy cottage was then no longer in existence, were able to certify, on their return home, that the foundation of it which remained, corresponded, in every part, with the plan

of the walls they had measured before their

And she laughed at the shrewdness of her own illustration ; and determined, in her own mind, from that moment, that the whole story of the Holy House was a fabrication.

“Still,” interposed Isidora, “you have not told us, Monsignore, how the holy building was brought over to Italy.”

“In the same manner, no doubt, as that in which it had reached Illyria;” his Lordship answered with a show of great frankness and simplicity.

“Nay,” continued the Roman Chamberlain ; “but your Reverence must permit me to relate its perigrinations when, after a three years’ stay, it left the luckless Dalmatians* and blessed the shores of Italy. It first showed itself, noble ladies, amid a dark wood of laurels, from which this town has subsequently derived its name. But the concourse of devout pilgrims, who soon flocked towards it, as speedily attracted a

* Hence the hymn which is prefixed to this Chapter.

band of desperate robbers, who waylaid and plundered them while bent on their pious purpose. Now it seems that the agents in the wanderings of the Holy House thought it easier to lift it up one fine night and to set it down a mile or two from the wood, than to suppress the robbers. This was accordingly done; and, of a sudden, it was found standing on a little cultivated hill near this place."

"What, not settled even then?" asked Donna Giulia.

"Not even then, lady. Pilgrims thronged to it with their offerings as before; and two brothers, to whom the land on which it stood belonged, strove with each other for the exclusive possession of so profitable a godsend. Fratricide impended; when the Holy House was mercifully removed from their jealous claims and was placed in the centre of the public highway where it now stands—or at least where it stood a few hours ago—one must not be too sure of its locality!—and where it has stood for the last two centuries."

"That it should have survived so many dangers and so many removals," observed the Count of Procida, "is, I own, as marvellous to me as the mode in which it is alleged to have been carried from place to place by the hands of angels. However," he added smiling, "we must, as the Signorina Isidora says, pre-suppose a miracle, and then a little more or less is equally easy of belief."

"Why," said the Bishop cautiously looking round, "I can explain that matter of the interposition of the angels to you and to these noble ladies, although one would not wish unnecessarily to remove a popular error which increases popular devotion. All monks and members of religious confraternities were formerly called angels and seraphim from the purity of their lives.* We may suppose that those holy walls having been removed by them a slight popular misapprehension or forget-

* See Du Cange's glossary of the Greek language for the middle ages.

fulness of the meaning of the words may have substituted the agency of angels for theirs. Those who profited by the mistake in the increased importance of their locality, have, of course, continued the delusion. If the people chuse to be deceived, let them be so. The deception can do no great harm, at all events ; and it is better to believe too much than too little. The idea warms their imagination and excites their piety by leading them to think of those by whom they believe the walls to have been sanctified."

"What a delightful idea you have given us, Monsignore !" exclaimed the Duchess, who having, as we have said, shown some shrewdness in the matter, felt her own little vanity interested in disproving the miracle. "There cannot be a doubt that the old walls were moved about by the monks who have, as usual, passed themselves off for angels! And if a whole community joined in the undertaking, it might be easily accomplished in

the course of a night or two. I remember an amusing story of the combinations of the monks of two different monasteries which will show how well they can agree together when they have need of union. I marvel that I never told it to thee, Isidora: it would have amused our lonely hours at Amalfi."

All present requested the lively Duchessa to recount the anecdote, which, whether new or not, was sure to derive point from her graceful manner of telling it. Such graces of look and of manner cannot be transferred to paper: her language, even, must appear no longer the same when transmuted into our northern dialect. Let the reader make allowance for all the necessary deficiencies, and imagine how that most bewitching woman must have looked while reciting the following story.

DONNA GIULIA'S STORY.

"You must know, *carina mia*," she said—"no doubt his reverence and these cavallieri are

well aware of the fact—that there is, somewhere in the south of the kingdom of France, a noble country called Provence, and which is possessed by our Holy Father the Pope and governed by his legates. In this province, as you may suppose, there are plenty of monasteries, each of which possesses the same holy rights of granting asylum as do the religious houses in Italy. Well; it happened, one fine day, that a poor mechanic of a town called Avignon had the ill luck to kill his comrade against whom he had long borne spite. The sbirri were at his heels; but he succeeded in making good his retreat to the sheltering walls of the convent of Benedictine monks. The sacristan, a portly lay-brother, received him at the church door, and bid him pass on to the central court of the building. Up came the wearied officers of justice and enquired for the criminal.

“‘He has taken sanctuary, gentlemen,’ said Fra Tommaso with a lordly air; ‘he has taken sanctuary and is beyond your reach.’”

“ ‘Peste!’ exclaimed the officer. ‘And so poor George’s death must go unavenged!’

“ ‘George whom, an it please your justizia?’ asked the Sacristan.

“ ‘George Dupré,’ answered the policeman.

“ ‘My unfortunate brother!’ exclaimed the sacristan smiting his forehead and retreating hastily to his cell.

“ ‘Such, indeed, was the case. The brother of the sacristan had been treacherously slain; and the murderer was receiving shelter from his monastery and was for ever rescued from the pursuits of justice. Fra Tommaso pondered over the disadvantages of asylums which had never occurred to him before: the spirit of revenge awoke within him, and soon took possession of his whole soul. He roamed thoughtfully about the house or gazed idly from the arched corridors upon the murderer as the latter quietly walked through the pleasant gardens of the monastery. The sight angered him beyond resistance: in a fit

of uncontrollable fury, he hastened to the old armoury of the monastery, and seized a dusty cross-bow; he returned to the corridor, and, placing a bolt in the engine, took his aim:—the murderer fell dead where he had stood.

“Here, however, was cause for all the ingenuity of the community. That a lay-brother, even, should have slain a man, and that man one who had fled to sanctuary, would bring indelible disgrace upon the order. And yet how avoid or evade the enquiries which the Pope’s legate would be sure to make? A sudden idea occurred to the Abbot. He bethought him of a Benedictine house situated a few miles down the Rhone, as I think they call the river, at a town named Arles, which was in France, and beyond the jurisdiction of the Pope. He assembled his community—monks, lay-brothers and all; and, taking boat upon the stream, floated quickly down to the neighbouring monastery. His brother abbot of

Arles had also the honour of the order at heart; and adopted the plan that was suggested to him: he called together all his household, and, returning with them by the same boat to Avignon, took possession of the deserted monastery of the others. This exchange was effected in one night.

“Morning dawned. That a murder had been committed in the Benedictine monastery was bruited through the streets of Avignon. The report reached the ears of the legate. He despatched a chamberlain to summon the offending sacristan to his presence. He was obeyed.

“‘How now, sacrilegious wretch,’ exclaimed his reverence addressing him: ‘how hast thou dared to defile the sanctuary by so unheard-of a crime?’

“The poor sacristan gazed with a stupefied look upon the prelate. But, at length, taking somewhat courage, he faltered forth—‘*Monseigneur, je viens d’Arles—I am but just arrived from Arles.*’

“ ‘Oh you are a stranger are you?’ asked the legate. ‘Where is the sacristan belonging to the monastery?’

“ ‘Monseigneur, I am but just arrived from Arles,’ repeated the accused humbly.

“ ‘And knowest, therefore, nothing of the charge?’ said the prelate. ‘I hope the offender has not been allowed to escape. Return to the monastery, good man; and tell the holy abbot that I request him to wait upon me instantly.’

“ ‘The sacristan retired: within half an hour, the abbot had taken his place before the legate.

“ ‘Reverend brother,’ commenced the latter, ‘explain to me the particulars of this foul deed which, I hear, has been committed within your holy walls.’

“ ‘Monseigneur,’ replied the Abbot with a shrug of the shoulders, ‘Monseigneur, I am but just arrived from Arles.’

“ ‘Dio mio!’ said the legate, ‘that stupid

sacristan must have made a mistake. Is there any other abbot in the house ?'

"'Non, Monseigneur; and I am only just arrived from Arles,' repeated the abbot.

"'How strange!' cried the prelate. 'Your reverence may retire, however; but send one of the monks—the oldest in the community.'

"A venerable-looking priest stood before the tribunal. He eyed the legate with a mild blue eye and leaned on a staff until he should be addressed.

"'Tell me, venerable Sir,' said the legate respectfully, 'tell me what is the meaning of the reports I hear touching the sad event which has happened in your monastery?'

"'Monseigneur—' replied the old man in a voice tremulous with age—'Monseigneur, I am but just arrived from Arles.'

"'Confusion!' cried the legate angrily, 'never was there a house so full of strangers! I cannot fathom the affair. Stay here,

you Sir, and do thou, huissier, go and summon the whole of the community, young and old, to appear immediately before us.'

"In half an hour, a sable crowd of monks stood before the tribunal: young and old, corpulent and emaciated, all were there—wearing a meek smile of self-satisfaction upon their otherwise varied countenances.

"‘Now then,’ said the legate, ‘now then, at least, we shall discover the truth. Speak, whoever of you knows any thing of the matter into which we are now enquiring, speak and tell how this horrible murder was committed within your walls.’

"‘Monseigneur,’ answered a portly monk who thought that the prelate’s eye fell upon himself, ‘Monseigneur, I am but just arrived from Arles.’

"‘Monseigneur, I am but just arrived from Arles!’ said another monk answering the glance of the interrogator.

"Monseigneur, I too am but just arrived

from Arles,' exclaimed a young novice with a merry healthy face.

" ' Monseigneur! mais, Monseigneur,' exclaimed the Abbot in a tone of affected wonderment, 'we are all of us but just arrived from Arles,'

" ' We are all of us but just arrived from Arles,' repeated a score of voices.

" The legate saw that some trick had been put upon him; and, rising from his throne, requested the Abbot to follow him into an adjoining room.

" ' Come, come,' he said good-naturedly: 'tell me all about it. You all belong to the Benedictine house at Arles and have changed places with the brotherhood of Avignon: Is it so?—tell me: and the sacristan will deserve to be pardoned for the ingenuity of the defence set up for him.' "

Donna Giulia here ended her story, which had received a point and a charm from her

animated and piquant mode of recital which the slender materials seemed, in no way, capable of affording. The listeners had heard her with delight; and applauded her with the zest of men who felt some personal interest in the adventures of a cloister. All Isidora's pious severity had vanished before her winning style: and Alfonso avowed to himself that no one who had not seen Isidora could withhold the palm of unrivalled beauty, grace, and witchery from his delightful kinswoman.

The hour was already waxing late; but the fair story-teller, ere withdrawing for the night, remembered her that she had not yet been informed what was the object of enquiry on which the commissioners were bent and which had given rise to the conversation of the evening. She was informed, with the serio-comic air which had characterised the whole discourse, that they had been sent, by Pope Clement, over to the headland of Dalmatia

which the Santa Casa had first favoured in its wanderings, to compare the foundations of the building which still remained on those shores, with the walls now honoured in Loretto. Perhaps his Holiness felt it necessary to re-assure the wavering faith of his people; or to excuse the expenditure, which his predecessors had commenced, and which he was obliged to carry on, for the more splendid adornment of the holy cottage.

"Whatever may have been the motive," said the chamberlain, "certain it is that we have been over to Fiume; and certain it is that some foundations of brick walls are there to be seen which correspond, in every particular, with those of the building now revered in this place. This is all that we have to declare; and to this we can bear witness: we are not called upon to give further testimony."

"But surely, Monsignore," exclaimed Isidora with unwonted energy, while it was

evident that her whole soul rebelled against dishonesty and imposition, "surely, Monsignore, we are not required to believe all the wonders or the fables which we have heard related this evening in respect of these contested walls?"

"I devoutly thank the holy church, my fair Signorina, that we are not," the Bishop gently replied, while he smiled at her vehemence. "No—no: the church is merciful; and requires our assent to no miracles that are not recorded in Scripture. However, *bella Signora Duchessa*," he added as the lady rose to withdraw for the night, "you will doubtless pay your devotions to the Holy Beings whom that shrine recalls to us: to-morrow, I shall have the great pleasure in accompanying you thither. May the angels grant you a less perturbed night than they vouchsafed, for so many years, to the building of which we have spoken!"

The visitors kissed the hand of the mild

and sensible old man, while he signed his blessing over them. In half an hour, they all slept that sound slumber which a day of fatigue ever procures to the young, the innocent, and the light-hearted.

The morning was yet early when our travellers passed from the episcopal palace towards the splendid church which now encloses the Santa Casa of which they had conversed at so much length. But for many years, a scene of confusion had surrounded the revered cottage: those columns, those porticos, those bas-reliefs which now arise in fair proportions, were then under the hands of the masons and stone-cutters. Years had been spent and years were still to pass away in the erection and embellishment of the larger church. Through this scene of labour, our party made their way and entered within the wide doors. But here, also, a modified confusion, and the subdued noises of workmen uprose around them. That splendid spend-

thrift, Leo X., had imagined a marble screen, of most exquisite workmanship, to encircle the lowly cottage on all sides—as if the air which was already enclosed by the large church around, were not sufficiently holy to press upon the humble walls of the pretended shrine. The choicest marbles had been selected and the best statuarics had been employed in ornamenting this gorgeous screen. Leo had died, and had left to his successors the charge of completing the work; and we may easily suppose that the straitened finances of the present Pontiff had, in part, urged him to send the deputation to Illyria in order to ascertain what claims the shrine possessed to such excessive veneration.

Our travellers passed within this second enclosure and entered the rude brick walls encased with precious gifts and votive offerings. They kneeled upon the marble pavement; and while Isidora remembered, with a sigh and a smile, all that she had heard on

the preceding evening, she prayed to the Holy Virgin that, if those walls had ever been really inhabited by her, she would pardon her disbelief of the legend ; and she besought her, at all events, to intercede with her Almighty Son that He would crown with success the application which her lover was about to make to the Emperor. The devotions of Donna Giulia were of no great duration : and again passing through the crowds of pilgrims, who knelt upon the steps around or kissed the floor which they believed to have been pressed by the feet of their Redeemer, the party emerged from the triple sanctuary and overlooked the spreading plain of the Adriatic sea. Beggars of every description, the lame and the blind, the young and the aged, the poor of the immediate neighbourhood and the wretched pilgrim who had brought his disease from a distant land in the hope of obtaining a miraculous cure—all thronged around them. The purses of the

travellers were cheerfully opened, and a small alms was bestowed upon each. Benedictions, long and fervent, loud and forced, or silent and heartfelt, were poured out upon the strangers. They passed hastily on to remount their horses.

Bernardo Accorto and Osmanna still tarried behind. They had followed their patrons to the shrine, and beheld it with feelings characteristic of the minds of both. Bernardo had looked on with a scarcely-suppressed sneer: an unwilling knee had scarcely bent where all else around humbled themselves. Scornfully and sarcastically, although silently, for he dared not openly express his disbelief, he had gazed down upon the humble piety of the simple-hearted wench beside him. No doubt had ever crossed the mind of Osmanna: with an unhesitating and a happy faith, she believed whatever had been told to her: and her whole ignorant and even superstitious mind bowed itself down to

venerate that which she had been told was venerable. There, she believed, had dwelt the virgin Madonna; there had she watched over her divine Son; those walls had witnessed unfathomable mysteries, wrought for the sake of man: and, that the memory of such goodness might live in every heart, those walls had been preserved by some special favour;—had been carried through the air by the hands of the very angels and brought to bless her country. So felt the ardent Italian girl. A holy fervour suffused her happy countenance, as she prostrated her head to the pavement, and signing herself over and over again, with the sign of the cross, devoutly kissed the sacred stones. Ardently and confidently she prayed; she prayed for herself; for her sweet young lady; and, above all, she prayed for Bernardo. She gazed on the images and the votive offerings around: and beheld in them so many irrefragable proofs that the prayers of others had been granted on that spot. Oh,

surely, she thought, that the Madonna would obtain the fulfilment of her prayer for her lover! There was a something about him which she could not understand: he went not to church; and he even spoke disparagingly of holy things. This could not be right: and she prayed to the Madonna to move his heart. She too would merit to be heard; she too would make her offering.

With a face rendered really beautiful by enthusiastic and holy feelings, she arose from her knees in answer to Bernardo's repeated hints that their patrons had left the church. She arose; and then again crossing herself and kissing the floor, she turned to leave the spot. A Sacristan stood beside the door with a silver tray to receive the offerings of devotees. With feelings worked up to the pitch of holy rapture, Osmanna raised her hands behind her neck and unclasped the ribband on which were strung some half-dozen yellow pearls—the hard earnings and the resolute savings of her young

years—and the thin gold cross that pressed against her throbbing heart. She carried it to her lips and kissed it over and over again : then timidly stretched out her hand and dropt it into the wide salver as an offering to the Madonna of Loretto. Tears of joy rose unbidden, and overflowed those full black eyes. She turned her hastily away, and followed Bernardo towards the outer door of the principal church.

“ Fool !” exclaimed he between his teeth on perceiving her make the offering. “ Fool—dolt—to cast away the neck-band in that manner !”

Fear of the by-standers, rather than respect for the place, induced him to mutter, in an inaudible voice, his curses on his sweetheart that she had thus lavished the value of three or four ducats which he already looked upon as his own. Osmanna heard him not; elated by her prayers, by the confidence which they had inspired, by the thought that she had done

a meritorious action, she tripped down the steps leading from the great doors of the church and gaily rejoined her lover. Side by side, they passed among those groups of beggars who had been just relieved by the charity of Donna Giulia and her party. The same appeals greeted them that had proved successful with their patrons.

"For the love of the blessed Virgin," they cried, "bestow an alms upon poor pilgrims."

"We ask not for much, good Signore; but give a little and secure the blessing of God."

"Give an old woman something, my bella ragazza—give an old woman something, my pretty lass, and she will pray that your prayers may be heard."

"Aye, that they will," interposed another crone: "I'll warrant me that she has prayed to the Madonna to some purpose: look at her beautiful eyes and her ruddy cheeks!"

Bernardo was pushing disdainfully onwards, when Osmanna slackened her pace. The last

appeal touched, at once, her charity, her vanity, and her love. She slipped her bronzed hand into a pocket concealed in the ample folds of her crimson stuff petticoat, and drawing forth a grosso, or small piece of silver the value of a groat, held it out to the old woman who had last appealed to her. With the usual voluble expressions of thanks, the beggar extended her shrivelled and shaking hand; but ere the little coin could touch her withered palm, Bernardo, thoroughly soured by the donation of the cross and pearls, angrily clutched hold of the wrist of the generous girl and wrenched the silver from her fingers.

"Pshaw!" he exclaimed, "enough has been already fooled away this morning, without pampering these false old hags."

He drew Osmanna's arm stiffly within his own, and walked sturdily onwards; while he tauntingly held up, between his finger and thumb, and exhibited to the group the little

coin which he had arrested on its mission of charity.

Shrill curses uprose from the insulted mendicants; but were soon overpowered by the angry voice of the old woman for whom that small donation had been destined.

"Curse him not, friends!" she exclaimed: "no one can do that office for him so well as he does it for himself. But pity the poor lass beside him. Have a heed, my fair ragazza," she cried, following the poor girl whom Bernardo compelled to advance at a slow and measured pace that he might not seem to regard the hootings of the rabble—"Have a heed, my fair child: have a heed of joining thy lot to that wretch. He who can rob the poor will make light of every crime. Theft and murder are in his eye: he is a Turk at heart; and blood is upon his hand: aye blood—blood!" she reiterated. "Holy Madonna! let it not be thine! He himself is cursed already: but scorn him; reject him; save himself, bella ragazza!"

By this time, the two fellow servants had stept out of ear-shot; and the old hag rejoined her companions: saying, "It was useless to curse him, comrades; he heeded ye not; better far to wound him where he could feel. He has an interest in that girl: saw ye it not? I have put distrust between them, ha! ha!"

"Bravo! bravo, mother," answered several of the confraternity. "Right well done: bravo!"

And, indeed, the words of the hag had not fallen unmarked upon the ears of Osmanna. A cold shudder passed through her frame as she heard them, and bethought her of the sacrilegious talk of her lover; of the bloody vengeance he had taken on Captain Schertel's trooper; and of his savage act towards herself on that fearful occasion. A sickness came over her as she fancied that she again tasted, on her lips, the warm blood of the slaughtered soldier. But she crossed herself devoutly;

and, putting up a short prayer to the Madonna of Loretto, and remembering, with some excusable feeling of self-satisfaction, the offering she had made to the shrine, she gradually subdued every doubtful feeling, and yielded her fond heart once more to the fascinations of her lover's serpent-tongue.

"What a poor simple fool she is!" said Bernardo to himself. "And yet, by Allab, I doubt if that is not the very reason for which I love her!"

Our chapter has already swelled itself to such an unusual length that we may not dilate upon the further journey of our friends: but will merely beg the reader to believe that they arrived at their destination in health, in spirits, and in beauty; and took up their abode in Bologna, in a handsome palace occupied by one of the many princely relatives of the renowned Duchess of Palliano.

CHAPTER IX.

THE CASA VERONICA.

Lasciate questo Canto, che senza esso
Può star l' istoria e non sarà men chiaro.

ARIOSTO.

Skip o'er this Chapter, ye who would not know
How Poets talked and felt three hundred years ago.

TRANSLATION OF THE ABOVE.

Men fade like leaves! Leaves budded from the pen,—
Forgive the equivoque—fade fast as men.

KENYON.

Aux plus sçavans Auteurs, comme aux plus grands guerriers,
Apollon ne promet qu' un nom et des lauriers.

BOILEAU.

A CURIOUS old town is Bologna, with its irregular squares, its winding streets, its projecting houses, and its white-washed arcades or piazzas supported by slender columns and

occupying the space of the front rooms on the ground floor of every house: curious, also, for the turbulence of its men, the elegance of its women, the short-sightedness of all—occasioned by the glare of the white arcades. Curious, also, is Bologna for the softness of its soap, the excellence of its sausages, the beauty of its artificial flowers.

Let the mention of these last introduce us into an ancient but capacious mansion occupied by the noble widow, Donna Veronica of Gambara, sister of the governor of the city under Clement VII., whose palace was in the immediate neighbourhood. Succeeding chroniclers have recorded how the halls of the lady of Gambara were thronged each day during this brilliant period. Her house was, at all times, an academy; for she had taken place in the first ranks of those literary characters who have rendered that age so illustrious: the kinswoman of the Peios, the pupil of Bembo, the friend of Vittoria Colonna, her

talents had extorted willing homage from all the learned; while her position in society, as the widow of one the most noble in the land, secured to her an intercourse with the great world which added lustre to her literary fame.

On the present occasion, the halls of the Casa Gambarà were more than usually thronged: for Bologna itself was, at that time, filled with strangers from all parts of Italy; and the windows of the noble widow were known to command a fine view of the procession of the Emperor, who was to pass beneath them on his entrance into the city and in his way to the church where the Holy Father was to place the Imperial crown upon his brows. Groups of ladies, learned recluses or frivolous courtiers, were now, therefore, seated around the Lady Veronica. Philosophers, poets, prelates, theologians and mathematicians stood, in several knots, about the rooms or sauntered towards the open windows

and gazed down on the moving multitudes below.

“The procession will not arrive for hours, my friends,” observed the lady of the house who, we should say, was a person of about forty-five years of age, diminutive in size, with plain and irregular features; but with an eye bright with restless vivacity and with a broad high forehead—ample enough to lodge all the intelligence which its owner was said to possess. “The procession,” she said, “will not be here for hours: those people are never exact to their time. Favour us meanwhile, Monsignor Pietro Bembo, by reciting some of your soul-stirring compositions. We are now honoured with the presence of several of the most illustrious minds in Italy: let us employ the interval until the procession arrive in making the compositions and the style of thought of each one of our visitors known to the others. There are few here, methinks, who cannot contribute something to delight and instruct us all.”

A murmur of applause greeted this proposal: for each ambitious composer foresaw the opportunity of reciting his own cherished lines or of reading his own paper of private lore; and the vanity of each was flattered. But Pietro Bembo's fame was too well established to seek for any such slight personal gratification: nor would he condescend to submit his unprinted compositions to the criticisms of so numerous and so mixed an assembly.

"I have nothing new, dear Donna Veronica," he therefore replied. "But I can contribute that which will interest many in this assembly, and peculiarly yonder fair ladies"—he said pointing to a group of the least learned, amongst whom Donna Giulia and Isidora sat and chatted with rather less gravity than was suited to the pretensions of the party. "I have in my hand," continued the prelate, "a manuscript which has just been sent to me by your dear friend, Vittoria Colonna."

"By my dear Vittoria!" exclaimed the

hostess eagerly. "How is she? I have not heard from her of late."

"Tranquil and resigned, I trust," answered Bembo: "and I hope not so much outwardly changed as she here represents herself to be."

He opened a roll of paper; and the name of the celebrated Vittoria had, at once, created so great an interest that all pressed around him and besought him to begin.

With great feeling, but with the twang with which all poets—for reasons best known to themselves—love to recite poetry, Bembo read the commencement of a canzone addressed, by the beautiful widow, to the spirit of her husband. We will insert the lines, to give some idea of the minor poetry of that period; and we will also strive to give a translation for the use of those who would not stop on what, we trust, is a walk of some interest, to pick up any stray flowers that may grow, rather out of their reach, by the way side.

CANZONE.

I.

Spirto gentil, che sei nel terzo giro,
Del ciel fra le beate anime asceso,
 Scarco del mortal peso,
Dove premio si rende a chi con fede
Vivendo fu d' honesto amore asceso :
A me, che del tuo ben non gia sospiro,
 Ma di me, ch' ancora spiro ;
Poi che al dolor, che nella mente siede
Sopra ogn' altro crudel, non si concede
Di metter fine all' angosciata vita,
Gli occhi che gia mi fur benigni tanto,
Volgi a gli miei ch' al pianto
Apron si larga e si continua uscita :
Vedi come mutati son da quelli
Che ti solean parer gia cosi belli.

I.

Oh gentle spirit, now enthron'd on high,
In the third heav'n, 'mid souls as pure and blest,
 From mortal coil at rest,
Where all receive the fair reward decreed
To love like that which fir'd thy faithful breast,
Bend, bend on me, who still repine and sigh
 That I too may not die ;—

That I too may not be in pity freed
 From griefs that make my heart with anguish bleed—
 That I may not cut short my hopeless years:
 Bend down those eyes that once so fondly bent
 On mine—on mine whose light is now all spent,
 Whose lids are now all swollen with ceaseless tears.
 O see how they are changed! Gaze down, and see
 How changed from those so beauteous deemed by thee.

*From the bright realm divine,
 Where, without me, thou saw'st the touch of love!*
 II.
*I love thee not more, but I love thee
 L' infinita ineffabile bellezza*
 Che sempre miri in ciel, non ti distorni

Che gli occhi a me non torni,
 A me, che già mirando ti credisti
 Di spender ben tutte le notti e i giorni:
 E se l'è levarli alla superna altezza
 Ti leva ogni vaghezza;
 Deh quanto mai qua giù più caro avesti,
 La pietà, almen cortese mi ti presti,
 Che in terra unqua non fui da te lontana;
 Et hora io n' ho d' haver più segno,
 Quando nel divin regno
 Dove senza me sei, v'è la fontana;
 S'amor non può, dunque pietà ti pieghil
 D'inchinar il bel guardo a li miei pieghil.

*Thou form'st me, but I form thee not
 II.
 Let not the unspeakable and boundless light,
 Which thou in heaven dost now for ever see,
 Withhold thine eyes from me.*

On whom thou didst of yore so fondly gaze,
And think each day and night well spent by thee.
If to behold the Godhead great and bright

Removes earthly delight,

O let that virtue which thou most didst praise,
Let pity make thee list to her who prays.

On earth we ne'er were parted, I did move
Still at thy side. Then, O bestow some sign

From the bright realm divine,

Where, without me, thou see'st the fount of love !

If love may not prevail, let pity sway ; |

Bend down one beauteous glance on me, I pray !

III.

Io sono, io son ben dessa ; hor vedi come

M' ha cangiato il dolor fiero e atroce,

Ch 'a fatica la voce

Puo di me dar la conoscenza vera.

Lassa, ch 'al tuo partir, parti veloce

Da le guancie, da gli occhi, e da le chiome

Questa, a cui davi nome

Tu di beltade ; ed io n 'andava altera

Che me 'l credea, perche in tal pregio t'era,

Ch'ella da me partisse allora ed ancho

Non tornasse mai più, non mi da noia :

Poichè tu, a cui sol gioia

Di lei dar intendea, mi vienì manco.

Non voglio no, s'anch' io non vengo dove

Tu sei, che questo od altro ben mi giove.

III.

Still, still I am thine own. Chang'd by despair
And pain, 'till few my former self would know :

My voice, all weak and low,
Can scarcely its real owner's tones recal.
Ah, me ! how quickly went when thou didst go,
How quickly went, from cheek, and eyes, and hair—

All thou didst once deem fair
And beautiful ! And I believed it all,
And priz'd whate'er might thy fond love enthal.
It grieves me not that ev'ry charm be fled,
That ev'ry charm be now for ever gone ;

Since thou, for whom alone
I cherished them—since thou, my love, art dead.
No—no ! I would not that, apart from thee,
These, or aught else, had power to solace me.

“ Poor Vittoria ! ” exclaimed Donna Ginli^a,
(as Bembo ceased reading, while he whispered
to the hostess “ There is more of it ; but it
would not interest so mixed a company ”—)
“ Poor Vittoria, I hope she is not grown
so very plain as she says. But you poets
always try to embellish matters—even by
making yourselves ugly or wicked.”

“ Wicked ! ” cried a young man with an

ready and libertine expression. "Your
e Signoria will pardon me; but the
na Vittoria of Colonna is the most holy
religious poet who ever lived; in fact,
is the first writer, since King David, who
attempted to sanctify poetry by restricting
pious subjects. Permit me to recite a
net of hers which has impressed itself on
memory."

With a self-assurance that waited not to be
encouraged, the speaker, who was no other
than the renowned Francesco Berni, began
to recite the following lines; and did so with
feeling and emotion which surprised those
who were acquainted, as all Italy was, with
his own compositions.

SONNETTO.

Vorrei l' orecchia haver qui chiusa e sorda
Per udir coi pensier più fermi e intenti
L' alte angeliche voci e i dolci accenti
Che vera pace in vero amor concorda.

Spira un' aer vital tra corda e corda

Divino e puro in quei vivi strumenti;

E si move a un fine i lor concetti,

Che l' eterna harmonia mai non' si discorda.

Amor alza le voci; Amor le abassa,

Orlino e batte egual l' ampia misura,

Che non mai fuor del segno in van percuote,

Semper è più dolce il suon; se ben ei passa

Per le mutanze in più diverse note,

Che ghi compona il canto ivi, n' ha cura.

SONNET.

Would that mine ears were deaf to earthly sound,

That every thought might more intently dwell

On the sweet tenors and notes angelical

eminence although a humble imitator of Berni; who, as the founder of burlesque poetry, in Italy, has had the honour, such as it is, of giving his name to that style of composition. Poesia Bernesea then delighted all hearts, and is still thought, by those who have only heard of its existence, to be something more than rhymes fluently strung together in the most familiar language of the day; without wit, without point, without elegance, without thought, without feeling, without decency:—a tissue of common place ideas—except where they are, beyond measure, indelicate—flung together in language whose only pretension to humour is derived from its familiarity and vulgarity.

“Bravo, Berni!” exclaimed another poet of this flourishing school. “How edifying it is to hear thee recite on holy subjects and stand up for the oppressed!”

“Thou dost not think that I am always tilting against my neighbours, like Aretino

or like thee, who hast been attacking all Italy at once, high and low, in criticising our mode of speech?"

"He alludes to a little poem of mine," observed the rhymster addressing the mistress of the house with a mock show of modesty through which real self-conceit was sufficiently evident: "a poem which is intended to check the new fashion of speech which the Spaniards have introduced. What can be more absurd than that people should address one another and be addressed as Vostra Signoria — your lordship? See how such ceremonies have gradually usurped an empire over society! Formerly people addressed themselves frankly as 'thee' and 'thou:' what they meant was, at once, intelligible; but the style was too humble for the ambitious great; and the second person of the plural was to be employed, and 'you' was to be said to an individual. This sufficed for a while; but soon 'your lordship' was intro-

duced in every discourse: whether you spoke to man, woman or child—to noble, merchant or priest—unless your were as familiar with him as with your own father—he was to be addressed as ‘your lordship.’ Bah! But we were then far from knowing the worst! For soon after the Spaniards came and taught us to call one another ‘illustrious’ and ‘most illustrious’ and ‘most reverend lords and ladies.’ What a waste of breath, of paper and of ink!”

“A serious consideration for a poet!” interposed Donna Giulia, somewhat irreverently.

“Be it so, most illustrious lady,” continued the speaker laughing and laying some emphasis on the expression. “‘Thee’ and ‘thou’ can now be only used with servants: ‘you’ even, which used to have some pretensions, now only slips out inadvertently and must be instantly replaced by ‘your reverence,’ or ‘your excellency,’ or ‘your lordship,’ or

'your magnificence.' Shame! shame! it is a disgrace to Italy to pass such unmeaning, such valueless coin for sterling worth! and as to the written V.S. into which the Vossignoria has been abbreviated, it would puzzle even our mathematical friend here, Tartaglia, to prove the meaning of the silly symbols, had he been uneducated to their import.*

"Nay," said Laura Terracina who, as a celebrated Neapolitan poet, was known to Donna Giulia, and had taken a seat near her, "Nay, the Signor Tartaglia needs no study to solve that or any other problem."

A young man with an animated but thoughtful cast of countenance, disfigured by a gash which parted his upper lip, moved towards the lively and pretty Laura; who, presenting him to the Duchessa, said, "Do tell us, Tartaglia, what is your real name. It is a shame that so eminent a mathematician and alge-

* There is a poem by Matteo Franzesi on this subject which, for a writer of that school, is clever.

braist as you—one who has discovered I know not what theories, should go down to futurity by no other name than that of "The Lisper. Tell us what was your father's name."

"My father had no name, bella Laura and illustrissima Signora," answered the young man beginning to talk of himself with a pleased vanity, excusable in one so young and so eminent. "Nay, I assure you that he had no name, that I can remember: one of the Countess of Gambara's poets has been talking against high sounding titles: none such were ever addressed to my father. I remember he was called 'little Michael the Rider':—he used to carry despatches for the gentry of Brescia, Bergamo, and Verona: he may have owned a more high-sounding name; but, if so, I never heard it."

"But how, Signore, how did you come by the name which you now bear?" asked Donna Giulia, somewhat interested by the manner of

the speaker and somewhat wearied by the recitations of the poets.

"My father, whatever may have been his name, died when I was very young; and my mother was reduced to the greatest distress. At length, when I was twelve years old, the town of Brescia, where we lived, was taken by the French. We, with the other women and children, fled to the church, thinking that the soldiery would respect it. But we were mistaken: they broke open the doors; and, in the confusion that ensued, my lip was cut open by a sword. The wound would not heal; for my mother could not pay to have it dressed; and, as it prevented me from speaking plain, my playfellows gave me the name of 'Tartaglia—the Lisper.' It marks me as well as another would."

"How strange!" said Isidora. "But if your mother was so poor, how could she, Signore, give you so excellent an education?"

"Oh, she managed that to perfection!"

replied the student laughing. "I had learned to read when I was half a dozen years old. This sufficed until I was fourteen, when she thought that I ought to learn to write. There was an old schoolmaster who engaged to teach me for no great sum of money, which, for my mother's convenience, was to be paid at three several times:—one third before I took my first lesson; one third when I should have learned as far as the letter K; and the remainder when I had got to the end of the alphabet. The first payment was made and I proceeded to admiration; but, arrived at the letter K, our funds were exhausted. The writing-master would not teach me farther without the stipulated payment; and there was my education cut short in the middle of the alphabet! However, I obtained from him a few copies of the other letters of the alphabet and I set to work with them. This was all the schooling of any description that I ever had: I puzzled out the rest of the alphabet

alone—and I have puzzled out some other matters also!" he added with a triumphant toss of his shaggy head.

A sensation, a murmur, now ran through the company. Donna Giulia started up, exclaiming, "It must be the procession! come quick, Isidora, to the balcony!"

"No! no!" said Donna Maria d'Arragona, the beautiful wife of the Marquis del Vasto, "it is only another of these clever people added to Donna Veronica's show-room: I marvel who it is: it must be some eminent man. Can you tell us, Signor Molza?"

"Signora Marchesa," answered the poet, "it is the Signor Ludovico Ariosto!"

Amid enthusiastic congratulations from all, the marked and thoughtful face of a man of about fifty years of age, overshadowed by an ample and lofty forehead and fringed by a thick beard, was seen by our friends pressing towards them. The traces of corporeal pain and mental anxiety were visible upon those

ample features; but yet the poet had a light word, a friendly grasp of the hand, or a gay glance of his bright eye, to bestow upon each one of the illustrious group who crowded around him. Courteously and yet quickly, he answered every interrogatory, and at length emerged into the more open space in front of the seats occupied by the friends around Donna Giulia and the Marchesa del Vasto. Respect for the high rank of these ladies prevented the literary crowd from following him within their circle; and with a graceful mixture of gallantry and humility, he stepped up to them both and successively raised their hands to his lips.

"Let me pay my homage where it is so well due," he said; "and escape from general congratulations to take a place which all might, indeed, envy me."

As he spoke, he seated himself upon a stool at the feet of the Marchesa, which, with a silent gesture, that lady had graciously pointed out to him.

"Wherefore all these congratulations, Ludovico?" asked Monsignore Bembo, who still retained his place in the more courtly group. "Is it for the laurel which the Emperor is to bestow upon thee?"

"What!" exclaimed Donna Giulia: "is the Emperor really to crown you, Signor Ariosto? What a charming sight it will be!"

"His Majesty has condescended to offer that honour to me—" answered the poet with a shrug of the shoulders: "but—"

"But," said the lady Veronica, "you consider that you have already crowned yourself with a more lasting wreath?"

"Have you refused the honour?" asked the Marchesa del Vasto.

"I have, noble lady: an honour which every petty prince in Italy is entitled to bestow upon those whom he may declare to be poets!* No doubt it would have been

* For example;—The Emperor Maximilian I. had granted to

greater when conferred by this mighty Emperor; but, methinks, it is greater still when awarded by the voice of the public," he added with a half-sarcastic smile.

"Surely," said Donna Giulia, "you do not prefer the approbation of the vulgar to that of princes?"

"The approbation of those who are best able to appreciate, is always most flattering to an author," replied the poet evasively. "Besides, the public pays best, and its judgment is, at all events, disinterestedly bestowed."

"Hallo, friend!" said Bembo, laughing; "thou art preaching strange doctrines—and in the presence of princes, too."

"But of princes," answered Ariosto, "who show themselves to be the noble patrons of

his counsellor, a Marquis of Montferret, an authority—"ut facere, creare, et instituere possit Poetas Laureatos ac quoscunque, qui, in artibus liberalibus ac maxime in carmenibus adeo profecerint ut promovere ad poeticam ad laureatum merito possint."

that in which they themselves have not time to excel. See here," he said, drawing forth from his breast a document which he partly opened, "this is the way in which the noble Marquis del Vasto exhibits his liberality—and as I, of course, opine, the goodness of his taste. See; this is something like!" he continued reading snatches from the partially-opened parchment. 'In the name of Christ, Amen. Whereas it is right that great princes and illustrious leaders of armies should be liberal and munificent towards men of excellent doctrine and particularly Poets who award fame to arms, therefore I, the most illustrious and most excellent Lord Alfonso of Avalos, Marquis del Vasto, and so on, 'recognising the very excellent poetry which has beamed on our times through the excellent Ludovico Ariosto, a noble Ferrarese'—and so on; 'grant him an annual pension for life of one hundred golden ducats secured upon a castle in Cremona,' the document goes on to

say. That, illustrious ladies, is noble patronage!" said the poet; "and I beg again most gratefully to kiss the hand of the beautiful Marchesa to whose husband I am so much beholden."

He suited the action to the words; and, with lordly condescension, the great lady received the thanks of the poor poet.

"Nay, but Signor Ariosto," remonstrated Donna Giulia, "surely it was the munificence of the Lords of Este that enabled you to build yourself a house in Ferrara. Is it not a splendid palace, such as you have so often described in your Orlando?"

"No, bella Duchessa: words are more easily and cheaply put together than stones. It is a small cottage and it bears an inscription declaring wherefore it is so:—

This house is small but fit for me and hurtful unto none.
Nor is it sordid as you see; and paid for with mine own."

"In truth," observed the lady del Vasto

* *Parva sed apta mihi, sed nulli obnoxia, nec non*

Sordida, parte meo sed tamen aere domus.

who was proud of the munificence which her husband had just shown, "in truth, the Signor Ariosto has laboured for many years for the state of Ferrara."

"Let me not be thought to be unjust towards my noble patrons of the house of Este," answered the poet quickly. "I am beholden to them for much kindness and for much countenance. But we literary people cannot blind ourselves to the knowledge that we bestow some equivalent in our labours. The fact is that society is become too polished to amuse itself with the professed fools who were formerly attached to the household of every great man; and that poets, as being the next cleverest set of people, have taken their place."

All present laughed at this sally as they thought it: but the poet continued more seriously:—"Formerly fools were the only people who could amuse, and priests were the only people who were sufficiently well-

informed to transact business: poets and literary men have now taken the place of both classes. For years and years have I, as has every man of any little eminence in Italy, devoted my time to the conduct of affairs of the state; I have followed my patron in war and peace; I have been sent embassies, I have transacted business, I have governed cities. It was an honour to be so employed: but it was work done for the state, and which the state was bound to pay for. I would merely suggest a doubt how many Italian princes, like del Vasto, enrich a poet for his poetical works only."

"For thee," said Bembo sarcastically, "they will crown thee with a laurel."

"While I have crowned them with immortality," answered Ariosto proudly. "Aye, they will crown me with a degraded laurel, while they institute a lawsuit against me and wrest from me my paternal inheritance on the plea that it is a fief which ought

to revert to the sovereign.* However, he added, recollecting himself; "far be it from me to insinuate a word against the noble house of Este. They are my very good lords, and the most munificent patrons of literature in the world. Nay; I speak advisedly—" he continued, seeing a sneer mantle the lips of the Marchesa: "I am able to judge—for I have received the highest patronage, spiritual and temporal: Leo X. granted me permission to print my poem: the Emperor Charles offers to crown me with a laurel. Having availed myself of all that has ever been bestowed by the one, I think I may venture to decline all that I am offered by the other."†

The swelling sounds of popular cheers, of

* A fact! The renowned Duke of Ferrara acted thus by Ariosto.

† It is strange that the world should persist in fancying that Ariosto was crowned by the Emperor: when we have a letter from his own son which indignantly denies the imputation, saying "It is a lie that he was ever crowned."

sacred anthems, and of military music, now rose upon the air, and gave evidence that the Emperor was indeed approaching. All hastened to take their places on the wide balconies; and literary interests gave place to the interests of worldly pomp.

CHAPTER X.

THE PROCESSION.

O schöner Tag, wenn endlich der Soldat
 Ins Leben heimkehrt, in die Menschlichkeit,
 Zum frohen Zug die Fahnen sich entfalten,
 Und heimwärts schlägt der sanfte Friedensmarsch.
 Wenn alle Hüte sich und Helme schmücken
 Mit grünen Mayen, dem letzten Raub der Felder!
 Der Städte Thore geben auf, von selbst,
 Nicht die Petarde braucht sie mehr zu sprengen:
 Von Menschen sind die Welle rings erfüllt,
 Von friedlichen, die in die Luft grüssen,—
 Hell klingt von allen Thürmen das Gelaut,
 Des blutgen Tages frohe Vesper schlagend.
 Aus Dörfern und aus Städten wimmelnd strömt
 Ein jauchzend Volk.

Schiller.

DEEP swelling notes of sacred music were
 now distinctly heard by the gazers from the

balcony ; and soon the surpliced files of choristers appeared in solemn procession at the end of the street. At their head moved one who carried a large cross of massive silver : and behind it was borne along the wide silken banner which flapped heavily against the flag staff, and gave only to partial view the keys of St. Peter, the golden balls of the Medici, and the arms of Bologna. Intermittent began to appear the two lines of white lawn-clad singers, when the eye of the beholder was, in some slight degree, relieved by the varied dresses of the mingled religious orders who succeeded. Then came the clergy of the different churches, dressed out in their most splendid vestments. All bore a waxlight of a thickness proportioned to their rank ; all joined in the same triumphant chant ; and almost all gazed quietly, as they passed, on those who gazed upon them. Statues and relics, crosses and wreaths of flowers, succeeded one another, in gorgeous array, between the two

files of clergy: the ineffectual flicker of the tapers paled in the bright sun-shine or disappeared entirely in the wind; while dirty urchins ran along, on each side, and collected the dropping wax. At length, surrounded by the principal clergy of the district, and amid a blaze of light and a flutter of banners, appeared the papal legate. He had gone out of the town to greet the Emperor on the part of the Pontiff; and now returned before him towards the neighbouring old gothic church of San Petronio which opened wide its portals at the other end of the street in which stood the Casa Veronica.

But the clergy had passed onwards. The pomp, and the glitter of war, as it showed in those gorgeous days, immediately took their place in the procession. Military music, from every variety of instrument, burst upon the air and dispelled that reserve and that monotony which saddens the pageants of nations less used to similar shows. Even the hearts

of the conquered Italians who gazed down from every tapestry-hung window, could not but feel some little elation in concert with the enlivening strains. Behind the music, a small park of artillery was dragged slowly forward, surrounded by engineers whose faces, purposely begrimed with charcoal and saltpetre, awakened increased terror in those who beheld the objects of their still mysterious art. Bands of piqueurs and of cross-bowmen followed, to the tune of their own music, and under the shadow of their own victorious standard. These latter were all picked men; dressed out in the imperial colours, and with a richness proportioned to the esteem in which they were still held. A long and heavy sword together with a short dagger hung at their sides; a chain was wound around their necks; a medallion was on their slashed silk hats ornamented with feathers, and with many-coloured ribbands; from beneath these, their flowing wigs descended upon their shoulders, and

waved upon their jackets adorned with glittering spangles; and large badges worked in pearls ornamented their sleeves. On their shoulders, they carried their rich and elaborately carved bows with the lever and wheel to bend the instrument and arm it with bullets—able to pierce (they said) a plank half a foot thick. Nothing, in fact, was then more sure and deadly than the bullet, or even the quarrel of the cross-bow; and nothing could be more elegant than the whole design of the instrument and the steel-work with which its stock was most superbly inlaid.

After this favourite corps, came a small body of men armed with frails—a most ancient weapon, not yet quite discarded; and a company of Charles's favourite halberdiers, with their long-staved axes that might be used alternately for pushing or striking.

The heavy tramp of a large body of war-horses of a bone and muscle capable of supporting their own armour and that of the men—

at-arms whom they bore—a load of which we have now no idea—was next heard. Proud and terrible from the renown which still clung to them, these iron-clad machines advanced. Their gauntleted hands grasped the embroidered reins: their plated feet rested in the wide stirrups. Helmets, cuirasses, shields—all glittered in the noon-day sun. Their thighs were passed through shining plates of iron screwed on to the flaps of their saddles to protect the wearer and prevent them from losing their seats. Their horses, armed with gilded chanfrons, rich and flowing caparisons, feathers and cloths of gold, bore around their necks strings of gold or silver bells which rang cheerily as they pranced before the admiring crowd of spectators. A noisy band of clarionets, trumpets, horns, and warlike drums moved among those iron-clad masses and seemed to defy the world.

The archers of the guard followed next. This was still a favourite body in every army ;

and the bow and arrow long contended with gunpowder for the award of military commanders, who found the old fashioned shaft to be more unerring than the leaden bullet, and to create an effect by *visibly* wounding and terrifying the horses of the enemy which the unseen messenger of death did not produce. The improvements in the make of fire-arms could alone have driven archery from the field. In the Imperial procession, the archers still held an honourable place: indeed few corps, if any, could boast more splendid appointments. They bore no pike, no halberd: but their bows were ready strung: their armlets were bound to their left wrists with silver chains: around their necks, shining gorgets pressed upon their crimson doublets: on their heads were bright sallads, or steel caps, set with gilt nails and transparent stones; while the cassocks on their backs were sprinkled with jewelry: a short dagger, a bright sword, a vermillion-coloured quiver well stocked with

snafts of the utmost length—such was the equipment of this favourite body of men whom the poets in Donna Veronica's windows looked down upon with especial interest, as awakening associations and affording images which they could receive from no other arm.

A large body of harquebusiers followed the archers. These seemed to be equipped more for service and less for show than their predecessors had been. Their bandileers and flasks, which hung around like collars and contained the fine powder for the priming and the coarser sort for the charge, were, indeed, elegantly ornamented: but a plain leathern bag, slung to a broad belt, rested on their right hips, and contained the balls: a short sword was suspended on the other side by another strong belt which crossed the first on the chest. They were entirely enclosed in light but plain armour; and on their necks they wore chain mail gorgets. Their short harquebusses, which were all match-locks, were sturdily

shouldered; and in their left hands they carried their match cords ready ignited. Without a regret from poet or from lady, this sturdy infantry slowly passed out of sight.

For long ere the last file had moved towards the old Gothic church, many an eye had looked over it to the glittering cavalcade of knights, gentlemen and nobles, who now drew nigh in gay confusion. Who shall describe the gorgeous splendour exhibited by this victorious chivalry! Again we have recourse to the troubadour style of our old chronicler. Never, says he, were selected such dresses of crimson and cloth of gold. Rich satins and figured damask—all had been seized and treasured up to win honour and praise from the ladies. Their wide mantles were cut and slashed, here and there, up and down, and every where, so as to show off their beautiful linings and puffings out covered and heaped with precious stones and pearls. In many places they were even left open—were purposely slit up in

order to allow their rich armour, more brilliant than diamonds, to be seen beneath where it fitted to their graceful limbs as closely as if it had been made of wax.

Nor were the horses less richly clad than their lordly riders. Their poitrels, their housings, their chanfrons, manifoires, bridles, were covered with precious stones and rich jewelry. Their gilded chanfrons or head armour upheld large plumes of feathers, of different colours, which corresponded with those worn in the helmets of the knights. Rich mantles ornamented with rubies, turquoises, and emeralds, covered their flanks from the shoulder to the tail and almost swept the ground: while beneath this weight of armour and of drapery, they kicked and plunged as if in accordance with the bursts of music, and enabled their riders to exhibit their horsemanship with that pride and that success that was in them.

As this splendid cavalcade passed beneath the windows of Donna Veronica's mansion,

many a plumed helmet was bowed upon the neck of the charger, and many a greeting was gallantly bestowed upon the fair ladies who watched in the balcony above; and who replied with a wave of the kerchief or with a slight gesture of triumph and applause. Among the horsemen, one knight, in particular, bowed gaily and frankly to the beautiful Donna Giulia and her friend. He was not so gorgeously drest as most of the others; although his equipment was sufficiently handsome. Those near him looked up in the direction of his greeting; and marvelled to see the renowned Duchess so graciously return the salutation of an unknown knight. They saw not the happy smile, the crimson blush, and the slight, very slight motion of the hand with which the equally unknown Isidora, respecting whom all hearts were already making enquiries, acknowledged the greeting of her betrothed.

But interesting and more interesting to the

statators became the triumphant procession. The increased noise, music and magnificence, the emperor himself drew nigh. Herald preceded before and loudly proclaimed all his titles, adding that of Augustus which he now assumed. Noble, no doubt, was the animal which he rode; but the gorgeous drapery of green cloth, studded with the most precious jewels, which covered it on all sides and swept the ground—in the manner called *à la haute queue*—prevented any one of its limbs from being seen. Well and gracefully the young arch bestrode his concealed charger: and by an Italian who, for years, had imaged himself a grim-visaged barbarian as the conqueror and conqueror of his country, started in incredulous surprise on seeing the noble bearing of the horseman, who strove to unite the pomp of a conqueror and in the expression of his features, the pomp of a conqueror with the forbearance of a friend and a christian. As he was armed, it is true, in resplendent

armour; but this was partially concealed by the robes of peace. In his right hand, he held the ball of gold—the symbol of universal empire to which none before him had so full a claim: in his left hand was the sceptre: on his head was the crown of Charlemagne; on his shoulders the imperial mantle of scarlet lined with ermine, over which fell the chains and badges of most of the orders of chivalry in Europe. A canopy of cloth of gold, supported by golden staves, was carried above him by four of the principal nobles of his court. He conversed cheerfully with one or two of the Italian princes and with the Marquis del Vasto who rode beside him; and graciously, from time to time, acknowledged the cheers and acclamations which his noble presence drew from the crowds of spectators.

As he approached the palace of the governor of the city, which, as we have said, was close to that of Donna Veronica, its portals opened and a number of the principal nobility

of Italy with their wives advanced towards him, and presenting their children, some of whom were no more than eight years old, besought him that they might receive the order of knighthood from his victorious hand. Charles readily assented; and, borrowing a sword, immediately knighted several of these young aspirants to chivalry. Alas! ere they should grow up to man's estate, the order itself would begin to be regarded as an institution of barbarous ages.

Again the procession moved onwards towards the church where the Imperial crown, the crown of iron, and that of gold, awaited him who already bore that of Charlemagne. The sound of artillery shook the city; the air quivered to the notes of military music. The Imperial canopy had just passed beneath the balcony of Donna Veronica, when the folding doors of the church of San Petronio were thrown widely open; and from their low-browed Gothic arches issued another proces-

sion as gorgeous and as majestic, but more solemn than the first; and slowly moved towards the conqueror's array. Priests in their richest vestments, wax-lights, relics, crosses, banners, and fuming censors, slowly advanced to the sound of thrilling sacred chants which needed no instruments to sustain their even cadences. More and more of the priesthood and more and more of the sacred symbols were poured forth from those gloomy portals: at length, amid a maze of mitres and while a fresh discharge of artillery boomed upon the city, the chief pastor of the faithful, Pope Clement himself, appeared—seated on his throne and borne down those flights of steps beneath a canopy of white satin. The two processions advanced towards each other: and as the sovereign pontiff drew nigh, a shade of deep anxiety was visible upon his thoughtful brow. Well, indeed, might he hesitate to meet him by whose armies his capital had been so lately plundered, his terri-

stories ruined, his dignity insulted, and his own person imprisoned for many months ! Slowly, therefore, the procession of the priesthood advanced towards that of the Temporal Ruler. The two canopies were still a hundred yards apart, when the Emperor reined in his steed ; and, vaulting gracefully from his saddle, walked forwards to meet the Holy Father. A cheer of approbation uprose from the Italian lookers-on. Quickly the Emperor threaded his way amid the opening ranks of his glittering courtiers ; and quickly he reached the advancing canopy of the Pope, whose throne was lowered at his approach. Casting himself upon his knees, the mighty conqueror kissed the feet of the Pontiff and humbly besought his blessing.

The cheers of the people again arose, and drowned whatever words might have passed between the two powers. A flush was seen to overspread the handsome features of Clement as he signed the sign of the cross over the

suppliant Emperor and held out his hand to assist him to rise. His own throne was then uplifted and again borne back to the church. Charles walked beside it the few steps that intervened ere both disappeared from the spectators beneath the gates of the sanctuary. There the mitred clergy and there the principal knights also entered; and a guard of honour kept back the anxious crowd until the ceremony of the coronation should be completed and all should again issue forth to view.*

CHAPTER XI.

THE LEVEE.

Within 'twas brilliant all and light,
A thronging scene of figures bright ;
As when the setting sun has given
Ten thousand hues to summer even,
And from their tissue, fancy frames
Aerial knights and fairy dames.
Then slow her drooping head she raised
And fearful round the presence gazed ;
For him she sought who owned this state
The dreaded Prince whose will was fate.
She gazed on many a princely port
Might well have ruled a royal court ;
On many a splendid garb she gazed
Then turned bewildered and amazed ;
For all stood bare—

SCOTT.

THE ceremonies of the coronation were over.
The festivities immediately consequent upon
them were at their height. The Emperor was

lodged in the apartments adjoining those of the Pontiff, and frequent and friendly intercourse took place between them. Then it was that the affairs of Italy were, at length, definitively settled: then it was that Charles, urged by the necessities of other portions of his extended empire, showed a forbearance and a generosity to the vanquished which they had little hope of experiencing: then it was that—anxious to depress a turbulent republic which was known to favour the pretensions of the French—anxious above all to conciliate the Pope whose dignity he had so much outraged—he covenanted to restore the family of the Medici to Florence and to place Alessandro, the natural son of Clement's first cousin, Lorenzo, at the head

heroic resistance which the Florentines offered to the armies of the Emperor: we all know what a blot this convention has left upon the character of the Pontiff, whose family ambition has been for ages denounced by those who have never defined what lapse of years is required to give a legal title to power originally freely granted or cunningly usurped.

Far be it from us to attempt to define any period at which a despot may justly overthrow or supersede the settled institutions of a free state! The Pope and the Emperor had decided all such matters with regard to Italy: and joy at the unexpected moderation of the conqueror elated all those who had hastened to Bologna to swell the pageants with which power has ever cheated those who support it.

And bright and exciting were the festivities, the games, the tournaments, the jousts, that rapidly succeeded each other in the old town of Bologna! Never before had so much

beauty, wit, wealth, and valour been collected together: and Donna Giulia made amends to herself for all the seclusions he had endured at Amalfi. Let us look in upon the sparkling crowd on a day that had been long anticipated—the day on which the newly-crowned Emperor was to hold his court for the first time. How gorgeous were the spacious reception rooms! How gorgeous the hundreds who filled them! There were the great Spanish lords, the Duke of Alba and the Count of Benvenuto: there were the first princes of Italy, the most renowned leaders of armies: there were foreigners from distant countries, all collected to do homage to the new Augustus Cæsar. There were the Duke of Urbino, the Duke of Fiorenza, the ambassadors of the Venetians, the envoys of the hapless Florentines whom Charles had ever refused to receive as such: there was Don Ferdinand of Gonzaga, Prince of Molfetta: there were the Cardinals who swelled the

papal court: there was Don Francesco of Este, Marquis of Padula: there were the Marquis del Vasto, the Prince of Salerno, the Marquis of Lanoi: there too was Francesco Sforza, the long-persecuted Duke of Milan whom the Imperial policy had unexpectedly restored to his dominion. But, says the Italian chronicler, that which rendered the assembly most august and superb, was the re-union of the most illustrious ladies, adorned with the rarest beauty and the most excellent gifts and manners. Who shall describe the singular beauty, the regal bearing, the wit, the incomparable judgment of Donna Maria d'Arragona Marchesa del Vasto, whom we have before met? or the scarcely less equal claims of her sister, Donna Giovanna d'Arragona, wife of Ascanio Colonna? Who can pourtray the splendour and the charms of Donna Isabella Villamarina, Princess of Salerno — the apostrophised of Cardinal Pompeo?

of Donna Isabella of Capua, wife of Ferdinand Gongaza? of Donna Maria di Cordona, Marchesa della Padula? of the Princess of Bisignano, or of Donna Isabella Colonna, Princess of Sulmona? of Donna Clarice Ursina? of Donna Roberta Caraffa, Duchessa of Maddaloni? of Donna Dorotea Gonzaga, Marchesa of Bitonto? or, above all, of the renowned Donna Giulia of Gonzaga, widow of Vespasian Colonna and Duchess of Palliano? Oh, she was lovely as the evening star; bright as the water that it spangles with its beauty; gladsome as the young lark when it first springs from its lowly nest towards the azure sky; splendid as the lily that o'ertops the neighbouring flowers and arrests the eye with the lustre of its glorious whiteness! It seemeth not meet to record the charms of maiden beauty, yet who could look on the fair girl who moved ever at her side without regretting that his pen might not for ever dwell on descriptions of her love-

liness? On her, all eyes were bent; for her, all hearts beat more quickly; of her, spoke every tongue; while she, serene in the splendour of her loveliness moved among the great ones of the earth with pleased surprise: received their homage and their admiration with a show of innocent pleasure and of dignified calmness; while the bright lustre of her eyes, whenever one unknown knight approached, betrayed that she treasured in her heart of hearts — But enough! enough! breaks off the old chronicler abruptly: How many noble lords wished themselves in the place of that scarce known yet handsome Count of Procida!

A murmur, an agitation, an unusual excitement was perceptible in the courtly throng that awaited the coming forth of the Emperor. Angry looks were exchanged between the haughty grandees of Spain and the Neapolitan nobility. Several of the latter cast their jewelled hats upon their heads and glared

upon the other covered and uncovered strangers. Little was spoken by the knights; but the ladies, as usual, freely discoursed of the matter in dispute.

“They are entitled to it!”

“But the Emperor will never allow it!”

“It is a right inherent to Neapolitan titles!”

“And the Emperor is now King of Naples!”

“But, it is restricted to the grandees of Spain!”

Such were the exclamations which broke, in sweeter or in shriller, in gentler or in more energetic, tones from many fast-moving lips. Unhappy the spoiled children of prosperity who expend, on matters of personal vanity, an energy with which less pampered natures struggle to overcome the awards of fate! Oh is not man more to be pitied in his pleasures than in his sufferings?

To keep the head covered in the presence of the Sovereign was an old privilege of the

Spanish nobility : the titled ones of Naples, also, had ever exercised the same right before their native Kings. Charles had now made himself King of Naples ; and his new subjects saw no reason for resigning, in his favour, a privilege which they had always enjoyed. But while the youthful monarch, with a craft and a method far beyond his years, had assumed to himself most of the real power formerly exercised by the Spanish nobles, he had soothed their vanity by the bestowal of empty honours to which it was necessary that he should seem to attach a value equivalent to that which he had obtained for them. He had, therefore, exalted the title of Grandee of Spain far above all other titles ; so that those by whom it was borne would not willingly see themselves brought down to a level with the numerous nobility of a conquered kingdom.

The Count of Procida's heart beat quick, as he pressed over his brow his plumed hat.

"Thou hadst better not, Alfonso," mur-

mured the lovely Isidora in an under tone.
"Thou comest here as a suppliant to the
Emperor; it were unwise to thwart that which
we must presume to be his will."

"It is my birth-right, dearest," answered
Alfonso proudly. "I may not sell it as the
price of justice. Whatever the conqueror
orders, we must obey. I will not be one to
dispute his will, I whose sires have ever bat-
tled to make that will supreme in Naples."

A door at the extremity of the spacious hall
which, being known to lead to the private
apartment of the monarch, was not encumbered
by the throng which filled the rest of the room
—opened; and Charles himself, attired in
much of the magnificence which we have
before described, stepped into the open space.
He was accompanied only by two persons—
the old Cardinal of Tavera whom we have met
with in Spain and Don Pietro of Toledo—the
future viceroy of Naples, the builder of the
splendid street that still bears his name. The

Emperor paused after the first step; and the open expression of amenity, which had overspread his rather handsome features, gave place to one of surprise and vexation as his eye fell upon the many bonetted heads that bent before him. For a moment he stood irresolute: but the dark frown which he read upon the features of the Duke of Alva and the other Spanish lords, showed him the necessity of taking a decisive part at once.

"Step forward, Don Pietro," he said in his natural tones, but which the silence of the assembly rendered distinctly audible; "step forward and explain to my noble subjects of Italy what are the privileges of the grandees of Spain."

The voice of one unseen, rendered bold by distance, was heard to expostulate—"It is the privilege also of the titled of the kingdom of Naples."

"Tell them, then," said Charles to his favourite in the same modulated tone, although

a slight quivering of anger was perceptible in it—"Tell them, then, to retire and wear their hats in the streets of Naples; but not in our presence."

The old Marchese della Tripalda and the Count of Procida uncovered their heads at the same moment. Charles marked them both; and his brow lost some of its sternness. The example thus given was contagious, and ere the Emperor had crossed the open space that divided him from the throng, not a head in the room remained covered excepting those of the old Spanish grandees who grimly smiled as they noted the humiliation of their competitors.

The Emperor advanced across the open space; and he had marked the conciliatory action of Alfonso of Procida, whom, although he had before seen him, he remembered not. This alone would have sufficed to give an inclination to those footsteps, undecided as to the quarter which they should first honour.

But, beside the unknown Neapolitan noble, Charles had beheld, when he first entered the room, the two lovely women whose beauty shed its light over his splendid court. He spoke enquiringly to Don Pietro of Toledo, and then addressed himself to the group with that endeavour to please and to win approbation which every man must feel in his advances towards such models of feminine perfection.

"For once," he gallantly said, "fame has reported truly! and we recognise the beautiful Duchesse of Palliano of whom we have so long heard."

"So long?" repeated Donna Giulia gaily. "Let not your Majesty imply that I am so very, very old!"

"Old only to those who measure your years by the impatience they have felt to behold you," replied the Monarch in a complimentary strain that was to be deemed flattering and eloquent from royal lips. "Know you, fair lady, that we had heard of you in Spain?"

But who is this beautiful child beside you?" he asked, turning to Isidora. "By St. Peter of Alcantara, but we knew not the value of our conquests!"

Donna Giulia had an affectionate heart: she really loved her friend, and wished to advance her suit: she had presence of mind:—above all, she had tact—that most important quality in worldly intercourse, that quality in which women so generally excel the grosser sex: she saw how valuable was the present moment, and she had never deferred until

A slight shade crossed the features of the monarch. Sovereigns are suspicious of appeals to their justice. He cast an enquiring look upon the poor girl, whose fair skin was instantly mantled with blushes, while unbidden tears arose in her large brown eyes. The heart of the young Emperor was touched—either by the spirit of justice or by that admiration for two lovely women, we will not enquire;—and he kindly bid the warm-hearted Giulia to explain her meaning.

“Let not your Highness deem that I have right to ask for myself,” said the Duchess, perceiving that slight shade of dissatisfaction. “Others will appeal to your Majesty to bestow: I ask for leave to surrender.” The royal brow cleared up; and, with a winning earnestness, the fair advocate proceeded: “A Neapolitan gentleman had been unjustly accused: he fled to Spain and appealed to your Majesty: you granted him letters of pardon: they were disregarded by the late Don Ugo of Monçada:

his lands were confiscated; part of them were bestowed upon my late husband: I fear lest they should be granted anew to my family, and I appeal to your Grace to authorise me to surrender them to their rightful owner."

"A curious request, in very truth!" exclaimed Charles, smiling. "Would that we had more such! But how does this touch this lovely Signorina?"

"She is betrothed to the knight I speak of: but may not wed until he have recovered his rightful possessions?"

"And who is the knight in question?" asked the Emperor.

"The Count of Procida," replied the Duchesse, while Alfonso moved a step in advance. "The Count of Procida, who, although repulsed by Don Ugo, fought gallantly for your Majesty in the sea engagement and suffered a long imprisonment: and who has just now set an example to those

proud nobles that they should lower their crests at your royal pleasure."

"We marked that he did so;" the Emperor answered much pleased. "Your prayer, bella Donna Giulia, to be permitted to dispossess yourself of your lands, is so extraordinary that we, at once, grant it—if only for the sake of example to others who have beset us, ever since we landed at Genoa, with petitions to bestow, not to take away. May we thus merit the thanks of that little heart?" he asked, addressing Isidora.

But that little heart was all unused to meet Emperors; all unused to feel its destinies hang upon their slightest breath; and had been taken unawares by the sudden and unplanned application of the Duchess. Isidora sank on her knees, and grasping the hand which Charles held out to her, fervently kissed it as she let fall upon it an irrepressible tear. The Monarch kindly raised her, and said in a gentle tone to Donna

Giulia, "your prayer shall be granted at once—be the lands a fief of the crown or be they not—they shall be immediately granted to him whom you and this sweet angel favour. We think, young sir, to have seen your father before?" he added, turning to the Count of Procida.

"At Toledo, Sire; after the bull-fight in which Rodriguez perished."

"Behold, Don Pietro," said Charles to his favourite, "Behold him who did the exploit of which thou hast so often spoken;—thou who dost prize the feats of a torrejito as equal to those of arms. But we thought, Count of Procida," he added, "that we had before granted you letters of free pardon with orders that your lands should be restored?"

"You did, my liege," replied the young man; "but they were evaded by the Viceroy of Naples; and I am still a petitioner for the bulk of my possessions, while I thank your Majesty for the little fief which you have just restored to me."

"Nay—nay; thank the beautiful Donna Giulia of Gonzaga and the gentle looks of her equally lovely friend," Charles answered with gallantry. "We must be on our guard against such fascinations for the future! We will, however, set aside any previous and unwarranted decision of the Viceroy: and give directions that the courts of law shall re-open and decide upon your case. But your fair intercessors must not again plead for you, lest favour defeat the ends of justice."

"I seek but justice, my liege," Alfonso answered, as the Emperor was turning away. Again a slight frown passed that dreaded countenance, as its owner passed on to another group: a frown occasioned by Alfonso's perseverance in asserting his rights; by the absence of all expression of gratitude for the small act of justice that had been vouchsafed to him as a boon. It is pleasanter to be generous than just: and sovereigns like to have the thanks due to generosity when they

only administer justice. However, as the Count of Procida had that day set an example to others which had removed an immediate difficulty, the imperial mind was, on the whole, well-disposed towards him. Serenely, therefore, the monarch circulated amongst his obsequious courtiers; and heard, with equanimity, the appeals of the conquered Italians and the grasping demands of his Spanish or German captains. Lands and honours were bestowed — sometimes rightly, sometimes amiss; and when the brilliant pageant broke up, the usual amount of depression, exultation, or disappointment was concealed beneath the accustomed mask which society had taught each to wear. We need not say which sentiment reigned in the greater number of hearts.

Se a ciascun' l' interno affanno

Si vedesse in fronte scritto,

Quanti mai che invidia fanno

Ci farebbero pietà!

Joy, however, joy, hope, and love predominated in the hearts of the three persons present at that levée in whom we have chiefly interested ourselves. True that Alfonso might complain that his rights were exposed to the doubtful arbitration of a legal tribunal; but hope anticipated with assurance a favourable decision; and the immediate restoration of his estate at Amalfi--no inconsiderable possession--was, at least, assured to him. This seemed to be a good augury. It would, at all events, preserve him from anything like the extreme of want to which he had been before exposed. Perhaps the old Recluse might waive the exact fulfilment of the conditions of that consent which he had given to his marriage with Isidora in consideration of what had been already accomplished. At all events, Isidora smiled upon him: her soul, ignorant of the chilling forms and evasions of law, was full of joyful anticipations: she had heard her lover praised by those lips

whose words gave fame or dishonour: nay, she herself had contributed to the success which elated them all: she herself had been noticed; had been favourably, benignly noticed by him for whose approval the world around her ruled their own conduct: she, the orphan daughter of the humble steward, had won that approbation from the Emperor which courtly dames might envy, but which they could not forget. Who would now say that the high-born Count of Procida would demean himself by an alliance with Isidoro de' Massimi?

But not less elated than the two lovers, was the light-hearted and joyous Donna Giulia of Gonzaga. To her, she felt that they were indebted for whatever success had, thus far, crowned their hopes. Her tact, her manners, her beauty—above all her beauty—had accomplished the triumph. The mighty Emperor had owned the fascination of her charms; and she herself felt as much pleasure

in the late evidence of their power as does the sportsman in the action of his steed when it distances all others in the field. It was not pride, it was not vanity : it was the inconsiderate sensation of pleasure derived from the consciousness of her own powers. Moreover, she had done a kind and, as she believed, a just, action. Her kinsfolk, the Colonnas, would, she knew, put in a claim to the property : she knew their grasping disposition and had ever recoiled from their pride. Alfonso she had ever liked. Isidora she had taken to as to a sister ; and it was pleasing to her to be the principal promoter of that which all people love to make or to mar—a love match.

Gaily, then, they returned to their own temporary quarters ; and gaily they prepared to attend the festivities which were to close the day. Another and another succeeded : and everywhere Donna Giulia asserted and proved the power of her unrivalled beauty. She and

her friend were the admired, the courted of all: they moved in a circle of adorers whose homage would have been equally divided but for the reserve which custom imposed upon the unmarried, and which Isidora sought rather to cherish than to dispel. Weeks passed away in a round of unexampled splendour and gaiety. Festivities, theatrical shows, processions, tournaments, succeeded one another without intermission. Often did Alfonso exhibit his horsemanship and his knightly skill: once he carried away the prize from the best lances in Italy; and, what he valued more than all, received that prize from the hands of the joyous Giulia and the blushing Isidora.

At length, the affairs of nations, which the leaders had assiduously transacted amid all this apparent thoughtlessness, were settled—for the present. Clement had promised to call a general council to reform the abuses which disgraced the discipline of the church:

and the diet of the German states, at Spire, had decreed to make no further innovations in the established religion until that council should have met and decided all matters in dispute.

But against this decree, some of the representatives who had been out-voted at the diet, solemnly protested. The word PROTESTANT had hence arisen, and startled the ears of men. Envoys from the disaffected minority soon sought the Emperor in Italy; and evinced a spirit of resistance which called for his immediate presence in Germany. He left Bologna; and the old town at once resumed its wonted monotony: its manufacture of flowers, soap, and sausages; its talk of the wondrous height of the tall tower and of the wondrous inclination of the shorter one. Its piety, its factions, and its fine arts awoke again. Donna Giulia hastened from the dull old city with the retiring crowds. She now

thought with less dread of the retired solitude of Amalfi; a few months would be useful to recruit her jaded freshness; and Naples was now at peace and as gay as ever. Besides, she would personally restore to Alfonso the property which she had recovered for him. He himself was impatient to depart; his presence was necessary to the successful prosecution of his claims before the Neapolitan courts of law. Isidora had ever loved the hills of Sorrento and Amalfi: and to those beauteous hills they

CHAPTER XII.

THE FISHERMAN.

"This Hermit good lives in that wood
Which slopes down to the sea.
How sweetly his sweet voice he rears!
He loves to talk with mariners
That come from a far countree.
He kneels at morn and noon and eve—
He hath a cushion plump:
It is the moss that wholly hides
The rotted old oak-stump.
The skiff-boat neared."

COLERIDGE.

hours, the days, the months sped on their
e. A few points of the never-to-be-ended
of war had been lost and won. The
—as those who inhabited this little seg-
of the globe phrase it—the world was

at peace. The sun gazed steadily on, and ripened the harvest of the labourer who feared not the spoliation of foreign foe or of foreign friend. What mattered it to him that the territory, of which he cultivated a few acres, had changed its supreme lord since the commencement of the contest? Political changes affect not the poor, unless remotely. Though the great ones of the earth may rise or sink, labour is still the lot of the mass of mankind. The lives of the mass are without variations, as are the seasons which are made for them. For them, for the mass of mankind, those seasons, with all their fruitful variety, have been settled from the beginning. Think who will that he reigns upon the earth: the sun is lord over all, and supplies, in due season, the wants of the lowly million. Those wants will be still the same under every political change: revolutions may sweep away rulers and their rule; but the people will still remain. Toil will be still their lot; and the

nature takes care, that they shall not
vain. In spite of all external changes, the fisher-
the bay of Naples had also regularly
their silent trade:—and lured, as usual,
bright torch that burned in their boats,
ediest of the slimy tenants of the water
ke the ambitious ones of the land,
a prey to their own inconsiderate
ness. In spite, too, of all the changes occasioned
war, the Recluse of Caprea had lived
ayed and counselled and succoured his
ighbours with the devotion which had
ice gained their esteem and affection.
strange the feeling of confidence with
all looked upon that wild and dark
That they knew not whom he was,
d, indeed, little to them: but still the
and the secular clergy of the neigh-
od shook their heads when they spoke
and lamented that he had never entered

some religious confraternity the wholesome restraint of whose rules might have tamed down his eccentric habits. The poor, however, heeded not such remarks: they revered him as he was—kind, beneficent to themselves—always amongst them—always ready to bestow advice which they believed to flow from supernatural sources of knowledge. Leonardo Accorto had been, in no way, singular in attributing superhuman powers to Csalvo: the whole country did the same: while the former thought that his knowledge was necessarily productive of evil, the latter looked upon him as little less than a guardian angel. And to them he was so: he had discovered in them purposes of evil: he had not thwarted them in their criminal machinations. Each party judged of him according to the manner in which he had acted up to their hopes and their objects in life.

It was one of those glaring days of summer when the heat of the sun is, in s

degree, tempered by the coolness of the atmosphere—ere the energies of life are destroyed by the sultry sleepiness of August—

"Shining on, shining on ; by no shadows made tender,

Till life falls asleep in its sameness of splendour."

Consalvo Berretta was slowly returning from the village church in Caprea where his constant attendance and pious demeanour saved him from all charges which his pretensions to supernatural knowledge might have otherwise exposed him to. He walked slowly and thoughtfully towards his hermitage :—silently waving his cross over the drowsy fishermen who lay stretched at full length on the rocky beach waiting till the coming night should bring a renewal of their toils. He had neared his beach when a boat was run ashore upon it ; and a strong, large-built fisherman, leaping lightly out as he cast forth the cable to which a large stone was appended in lieu of an anchor—came directly towards him. He

kneeled down as he neared the Recluse and reverently kissed his hand.

"God bless thee, my son," said the latter: "but what brings thee from Sorrento at this time of day? I have not seen thee this long while."

"Yet have I not been unmindful of the orders your reverence gave me—that I should keep an eye upon the movements of the Count of Procida's follower, Bernardo Accorto," replied Massaniello, whose burly form and marked features those who had once seen them could not easily forget. "I was never able to learn anything positive, and therefore I would not trouble you sooner."

"And now, hast thou learnt aught now?" asked the Recluse quickly.

"Nothing certain, father. Since the brigantine was seized last winter in the roads of Salerno, not a strange sail or a stranger of any sort has been seen on the coast. And this, your reverence, leads me to think that

the brigantine was not boarded by Italian and Neapolitan fishermen, as all the world believes?"

"Wherefore not?"

"Because if it had been so, we should most likely have missed some of our comrades, which we never have done; and another reason is that, since the seizure, we have never seen any of those strangers about, who were thought to be hangers-on to the Venetian fleet—or to that of the Prince of Melfi, as they now call the Genoese Admiral, Doria. I take it that he got Melfi as a reward for leaving the French and joining the Spaniards?"

"Whom, then, dost thou suppose to have seized the brigantine?" asked the Recluse without noticing the implied question of the fisherman.

"Corsairs, padre, Barbary Corsairs, who must have assembled here, the Saints know how! and who took that method of getting away again—may the devil seize them!"

"Truly they are desperate infidels," answered Consalvo. "But yet, as thou sayest, we have been quit of these piratical incursions for some time: the open attack of their fleet is less to be feared."

"Aye, but your reverence, I know not what to think now. As I was going down to the shore yesterday evening—I went by an unused road, for I had been out with Ninetta, in search of our boy Cecco, who begins now to wander away from home;—well, as I say, as I was going down to the beach, I came suddenly upon that Bernardo Accorto and a stranger with whom he was talking very earnestly."

"Bernardo Accorto!" exclaimed the Recluse. "How happens he to be at Sorrento? Is the family of the Duchessa of Palliano returned?"

"They have been returned for the last fortnight, padre Consalvo. But, as I came up to Bernardo and his friend, I wished them

a good evening and gazed hard at them the while. Bernardo spoke as frankly as he always does:—Santa Maria, but that fellow has too many words for an honest man!"

"And the friend?"

"The friend passed himself off as a trading Jew," answered Massaniello. "He wore on his head the badge which the good Emperor has ordered all these accursed Hebrews to wear; but he asked me, a poor fisherman, whether I had anything to sell or if I wanted to purchase any of his goods. Real Jews do not ask such questions of such as I. Besides, he had no pack of goods near him, that I could see: and he was not made like a real Jew."

"How meanest thou?"

"He did not look bent and cringing and starved and miserable like the other Jews, may heaven blast them! This one was tall, strong, straightforward, bold and frank: he looked more like a man-at-arms than a

trading Hebrew. But the greatest cause of suspicion is to be told :—after I had turned away and jumped down two or three shelves of rock, I looked back and saw the two worthies still talking on the cliff above. Well, it pleased the Madonna that a slight whiff of wind should arise just then ; and as it waved the mantle of my Jew a little on one side, I saw the overlapping plates of blackened armour on his thighs.”

“Art thou certain of this?”

“Does your reverence think I do not know the scales of a fish when I see them? I stood much below the pretended Jew ; and had a good view of his shell.”

Consalvo began to pace backwards and forwards thoughtfully on the cliff.

“I thought it right to come off and tell your reverence what I had seen,” said Massaniello.

Consalvo signed to him to be silent and continued his thoughtful walk. How much the faculty of commanding thought is de-

pendant upon habit and external objects ! Some can think best when they are seated in a room and gazing upon the near wall of a back court : * some think best when they are on the mountain tops with the clouds and the earth beneath them : † some think best when in their beds and apparently between sleeping and waking : ‡ some think best when they are fasting ; § and some when they are full :—when, after a hearty dinner, they are exciting their faculties by a few glasses of wine or spirits : || some can only think in the early morning before the cares of the day begin ; ¶ and some cannot think until their whole household is gone to bed and when the cares of the day are over : some can only think when a pipe or segar sends its stench up into their nostrils : some only when they are decked out in their best suit of clothes : ** some when they are waving about a twig or

* Lord Chesterfield. † Miss — ‡ Scott. § Milton.
 ¶ Byron and Blackstone. ¶ Cobbett. ** Handel.

a roll of paper : * and some, like ourselves, when they take their pen in hand. Such various modes of creating or invoking thought, prove only that thought will ever obey the summons of those who invoke it; although it will come more readily to each one under those external circumstances in which they have accustomed themselves to invoke it. People talk of a "habit of thought;" but thought itself is habit.

With Consalvo Berretta, long custom had rendered thought the constant handmaid and companion of those slow and measured paces to and fro along the beach in which he now indulged. Regularly and methodically he weighed in the balance of probabilities all that he had lately heard from the fisherman. The question as to who were the parties who had boarded and mastered the brigantine but remotely affected present interests : he passed, therefore, to the consideration of the stranger,

* *Mdme. de Stael.*

the Jew, seen by Massaniello. And wherefore should not the unknown have been really and truly a Hebrew trader? That the kingdom was full of such was a fact painfully known to all true Christians. That their numbers had immensely increased since Ferdinand and Isabella, the predecessors of the present Emperor, had driven them out of Spain, was deplored even by the legislature:—the fugitives from the Peninsula had taken shelter in Italy, and whole towns were peopled by them. Why should not him whom the fisherman had seen be one of these? He wore the badge which Charles had lately commanded all these wealthy but despised wanderers to wear:—he proposed to traffic in their style. Nay; might he not have ministered to the wants of the Count of Procida at the festivities at Bologna? It was known that many of the Italian nobility had mortgaged their estates or sold their hereditary possessions to the sons of Israel that they might obtain from them wherewith to,

maintain an unusual state on that occasion. Lands, jewels, plate, timber, all had been sacrificed. Was it not probable that Alfonso of Procida had also fallen into the snare baited by pride and poverty? "And, if he has so involved himself," mentally resolved the Recluse, "let him struggle through the weary apprenticeship he has incurred. Isidora shall never be sacrificed to a vain spendthrift!"

He was on the point of dismissing Massaniello, with thanks for his good intentions and with assurances that the dangers he feared were unreal, when the fisherman broke in upon his concluding meditations. "I know not, padre Consalvo, whether it be worth while to mention the matter," he said; "but as I and Ninetta came along with the boy Cecco after we had found him, his little tongue ran much upon matters which we judged to be only childish prattle. I know not; but while your reverence has been walking the deck there, I have been thinking the matter

over in my own way, and I may as well tell you, since I am here."

"What is it, amico?" asked the Recluse.

"Per Bacco! but he told us wonderful things which we only half attended to—as one attends to the babble of children. He said that he had wandered far ere we came to look for him, and that he had come at last to a wild spot overhanging the sea and had seen smoke come up from the ground amid the myrtle bushes that covered it. He had crept on amongst the bushes and had found a cleft in the rock through which the smoke ascended; and that, looking down, he had seen the glimmer of fire below. I know not what to think of all this, Signor Consalvo; but the child is a smart child although a wonderful talker: he will be a clever fellow if the good San Gennaro grant him life."

"Knowest thou aught of this?" asked Consalvo more seriously than the narrator had expected.

"I know the clump of myrtles, Eccellenza; but nothing more. The cliff does not there overhang the beach, so that there is no room for a cottage to have been built or even for a fire to have been lighted underneath. Still I cannot think the child can have invented it all. I came away directly or I would have enquired further."

"Children do not invent:" said the Recluse, "nor does any report arise without some foundation. This story, coupled with thine own thoughts, needs investigation. Dost thou return to Sorrento forthwith?"

"Per ubbedirla, yes."

"I will go with thee. Wait awhile."

He entered his cavern; and in a quarter of an hour re-appeared fully equipped for his journey—with the dagger which he wore whenever he stirred from Caprea, and the large wallet which he bore over his shoulder on all his more distant wanderings. Without speaking, but with an air of unusual

activity and decision, he stepped into the boat. Massaniello lifted the stone-weight; and hoisting a sail, and plying the short sturdy oars, stood quickly out to cross the narrow strait.

Speed thee, Consalvo! By all the interest thou dost feel in Isidora de' Massimi speed thee; for never were thy counsel and help more needed!

CHAPTER XIII.

OSMANNA.

Der Eichwald brauset, die Wolken ziehn,
 Das Mägdlein wandelt an Ufers Grün,
 Es bricht sich die Welle mit macht, mit macht
 Und sie singt hinaus in die finstre Nacht
 Das Auge von Weinen getrübet.

Das Herz ist gestorben, die Welt ist leer,
 Und weiter gibt sie dem Wunsche nichts mehr;
 Du Heilige, rufe dein kind zurück!
 Ich habe genossen das irdische Glück:
 Ich habe gelebt und geliebet.

SCHILLER'S TREKLA.

THE sun had lately set over the bay of Salerno, although it still spangled that of Naples with brilliancy; and still dotted, with roseate light

and with darker shadows, the western ridge of Sorrento. On the eastern side of that wooded and mountainous ridge, Bernardo and Osmanna wandered and talked as lovers will ever talk and walk. Osmanna wore the open-hearted, confiding, laughing, look that was usual to her. Bernardo seemed anxious, nervous, and excited. The two had evidently been sparring—perhaps as lovers will spar; and their spirits had not yet subsided into quiescent inanity.

“So thou wilt not tell me where the gold is concealed?” questioned Bernardo in something of a menacing tone.

“I cannot do more than I have, amico,” answered the girl smiling fondly. “I have owned to thee that it was concealed in the recess in the bed-room of the Signorina Isidora.”

“But it is not there now;” insisted the man. “I saw enough of the recess ere I was aware of thy Giuseppe’s harquebus, to

be quite sure that it contained no chests of any sort."

"Ha! ha! ha!" laughed Osmanna. "Santa Maria, but it must have been a droll sight to have marked thy grave face peering into the recess while Giuseppe pointed his harquebuss at thy head!"

Bernardo stamped his foot with vexation. "Nay, nay;" continued the girl; "do not be angry. I cannot tell what may have become of it: and I doubt whether I ought to have told thee as much as I have done."

"By Allah! but I suspect that thou hast made away with it thyself!—Given it to the trooper whose blood I gave thee a relish of; or to Giuseppe; or to some other of thy favourites."

"Who knows? ay who knows but what I have!" answered Osmanna, endeavouring by a bitter taunt to conceal the indignation which she felt. "They were all good men; and if one of them was a Lutheran, he was

not a Turk; nor had I been warned that he would murder me!"

"My curses on the old hags of Loretto!" growled Bernardo. "But I see that thou hast not half a mind to take the journey with me, and I suspect that some stupid fellow of limbs and iron has lured heart thy away. If I could really think so and discover him!"—he added in tones of suppressed fury.

"Thou hast given us a sample of what thou wouldst do," interposed Osmanna obstinately.

"Bah!" cried Bernardo stamping with his foot. "No more of that, I say! But, by all the powers of hell!" he added, "hither comes that cursed old Iettatore! I must be off. Thou hast the triumph of having so moved me that I dare not trust myself to meet the wily hermit. I have business too at Amalfi. Say nought to him of what has passed between us, on thy life!" he added, returning to her after he had proceeded a few steps.

When he was gone, the violent reaction of her sweet and thoughtless temper could sustain the poor girl no longer. She burst into a passionate flood of tears and sank upon the ground. With all the energy and passion of a Neapolitan, she sobbed aloud—rocking herself to and fro, and bewailing herself for the unworthy suspicions which she had endured. For, in very deed, never was heart more fond and true than that of the simple Osmanna. Perhaps, had she known as much of the mind and temper of Bernardo at the time when he first wooed her as she now knew, she would have resisted the blandishments of his flattering address. But that style of address was then new to her: it was soothing to the woman's vanity within her, to be spoken to in the strains in which she fancied that knights addressed high-born dames. She had never heard such fine words from any of the followers of her late master's neighbour, the President; nor even from the few troopers

who had praised her ruddy cheeks as they sauntered past the door. Bernardo had, therefore, appeared to her to be not only a superior person himself, but to consider her as such: and surely he was a judge—he who knew so much!

To vanity, therefore, her heart had fallen a prey; although gratitude and love had quickly replaced the first feeling. She had truly loved, and she still truly loved the ruffian: his reproaches were for that reason but the more cutting: and she was loudly calling on every saint to move his heart to its former gentleness towards her, when the Recluse, Consalvo, drew nigh. For although when he left Caprea, Consalvo had intended to land at Sorrento, yet, the breeze was so favourable that he had allowed Massaniello to carry him round the promontory and land him at Amalfi, so as to avoid the long and rugged walk which would have lain before him had he gone on shore on the western side of the

ridge. He had now but lately left the boat and was on his way to the villa of Donna Giulia.

"What is the matter, my poor child?" he said soothingly, as he approached Osmanna. A fresh burst of tears was her only answer. "Tell me, Osmanna, what ails thee. Thou hast been known to me from childhood. What has that Bernardo Accorto done to thee?"

"Oh, padre Consalvo, he is so unkind!" exclaimed the poor lass endeavouring to choke her sobs.

"I have grieved to know that thou wast to wed him," answered the Recluse; "but it is not yet too late."

"But it is too late not to love him, padre," retorted Osmanna looking up. "The more unkind he is, the more I think how kind and fond he might be."

"Silly wench!" sighed Consalvo. "But bethink thee," he said, "how thou wilt bear

constant harshness — unvaried by any fond words of affection. This will be thy lot when thou art once wedded to him. What wilt thou do then ?”

“I shall die, padre. That will be more easy than to cease to love him. And it has been foretold to me that he would be the death of me;” she added ; for her mind still recurred, with a sort of fascination, to the words of the old beggar woman.

“Foretold that he would murder thee !” exclaimed the Recluse. “Who could so mock thy affection ? Tell me, who was it that knew enough of him to speak of his character. Tell me, my good girl ; it is important that I should know.”

“Nay, your reverence, it was only the angry and, perhaps, the idle word of an old beggar-woman ; but I know not why it is, I cannot forget it.” Consalvo signed to her to continue and she briefly told the incident. “It was at the Holy House of the Madonna of

Loretto, padre," she said. "We went there with the Signora Duchessa and the Signorina and the Count. I had been praying very hard—oh so hard for Bernardo!—for there are some things in him that I do not think right—and was leaving the holy shrine when it was borne upon my heart that I should make an offering to the Madonna that she might repeat my prayers to her Son. But I had nothing in the world worth offering, holy padre Consalvo; for you know that it is the custom of all us girls, as soon as we earn a piece of money, to buy a pearl with it and string it on our neck-bands; and I had just bought two that made my ribband look quite nice and smart, so I had hardly a quattrino left. However, I felt in my heart that the more I gave up to the Madonna, the more likely she would be to hear my prayers: and so—and so—padre Consalvo, I untied my neck ribband and dropped it in the salver with the other offerings." Here she sobbed awhile with renewed energy.

but added, after a moment, "Perhaps it was wrong to give away so very much; but I had earned it all myself; and I only gave it for *his* sake, not for myself."

"And did he threaten thee for this, my poor child?" asked Consalvo kindly.

"No, Eccellenza; we were in the church, but I saw he looked as black as the cloud on Vesuvius. But when we came out, there were some poor old women who begged so earnestly for charity that it went to my heart, and I was about to give one of them a piece of four grani when he clutched it from our hands and dragged me on. And then it was that the old beggar woman swore at him, and said that cruel thing. But it is very silly of me to think of it; only your reverence is so kind and asked me to tell you."

The shade of the trees and the darkening twilight prevented the Recluse from seeing the crimson blush that mantled over the ingenuous homely features of the poor girl as

she simply told her tale : he heard, however, the renewed sobs, which she was unable to smother ; and was affected by her heartfelt piety. Perhaps, also, he had other objects in view and wished to propitiate her confidence : for so soon as she had concluded, he said, "The offering to the shrine of Loretto shall not be a cause of discord between ye, since thou art resolved to wed him. Take this reliquary in place of it," he continued, drawing from his breast a slight chain of silver to which a little case of the same metal and of the size of a modern watch was attached. "It contains some relics of some holy martyrs that I gathered myself from the catacombs of Rome. Wear it instead of the string thou hast left at Loretto ; and pray that the holy saints would defend thee from deceit and violence."

He cast the chain over her head as she knelt before him, and fervently kissed his hand.

"Oh, thank you, thank you, holy padre Consalvo!" she exclaimed. "This will make all right again! This will console him for the loss at Loretto: and I feared—I feared that, seeing him so cross ever since, I might in time come to regret that I had made the offering: and that would have been very, very wicked! Oh, padre Consalvo, how good you are! What can I say to thank you!"

"Thou canst tell me that which I shall be glad to know, Osmanna; and which may be the saving of thyself and of the Signorina, to whom I know that thou art attached. Tell me something about Bernardo."

Osmanna's countenance changed.

"Nay, I only want to know when ye are to be wedded and what is to be done then."

"Oh, padre Consalvo, I do not know. I have told him it could not be till the Signorina was wedded to the Count of Procida; and—we are going a journey—"

She stopped suddenly as though she had unintentionally betrayed more than she ought to have told.

"A journey—are ye?" asked the Recluse. "Whither is it to be; and do the ladies and the Count go with ye?"

"Indeed, your reverence, I do not know; and I think Bernardo would not have wished me to say any thing about it."

"Did he tell thee to keep it a secret?" asked Consalvo, eager to find some clue by which to guide his judgment.

"No; not exactly," answered Osmanna. "But he said we were going a great way, and that I should be a great lady with slaves to wait on me: but I could not understand half of it. What had I to do with slaves?"

"What indeed!" thought the Recluse to himself, while his eye-brows contracted and he inadvertently clutched his dagger. "Slaves," he muttered to himself: "this seems to con-

firm Massaniello's suspicions : as though he were at his old doings again. What was he talking about just now, Osmanna? What was it made thee weep so bitterly ere I came up?"

"Ought I to tell, your reverence?" asked Osmanna timidly, as one really anxious for information.

"Not if the matter was personal to yourselves and was perfectly innocent," answered the Recluse.

The poor girl clasped her hands and looking earnestly in the face of the old man, exclaimed, "Oh that I were scholar enough to judge what is right and what is wrong! But I trust to your reverence, you will not mislead a poor ignorant girl. He was questioning me," she continued to say, "about the gold that your reverence brought to our poor master in the Via Carbonara; and which he can no where find."

"So — so," murmured Consalvo : "that

matter presses not. Tell me, Osmanna," he said aloud; "and believe that I only ask for the good of thyself and of all who are dear to thee—for were thy lover to do a wicked deed thou wouldest not uphold him in it—tell me, hast thou seen any strangers about him of late—since his return hither?"

"Strangers? — no, padre," answered the girl with surprise.

"None? bethink thee: no sailors—or Jews?"

"Jews,—oh yes: I did not think of it."

Consalvo had learned all that he had any prospect of discovering from the simple-
minded wench ; and with some good advice
that she should watch over Bernardo and
not allow herself to be hurried into that
which was wrong by his violence, he now
left her and moved onwards towards the
residence of Donna Giulia. And this was the
way in which that severe and thoughtful man
collected up all that intelligence which he after-
wards recounted in such a style as to astonish
his hearers by the display of unsupposed
knowledge. Shrewd, calculating, wary, and
thoughtful, his knowledge of human nature en-
abled him, in the first place, to gain intelligence,
from unsuspected sources, which his stately
bearing and his manner as of one of superior
authority enabled him afterwards to give
forth with oracular emphasis. The world
never investigates the pretensions of its
rulers. Consalvo was one, in that district :

and the people would as soon have thought of enquiring into his sources of superior information as into the natural causes which produced an eruption of Vesuvius. Amongst a simple people, it is easy to pass for a warlock or a sage: it is fortunate when the object of their reverence is one who, like the Recluse of Caprea, wishes to impose upon them for their good only.

As he now slowly advanced towards the mansion, Consalvo revolved in his mind all that he had heard; and persuaded himself that mischief was really on foot. He triumphed in the thought! It would be for him to avert it! He, a solitary old man, would mix in the intrigues and turmoils of life, and would thwart the plans of the master-spirits whom discord and intrigue had raised over the world. This Bernardo could not be a principal in whatever was preparing. Some mightier spirit

evil must set him on. Who?—Barbassa the Dreaded, Soleyman the Magnificent? What mattered it who? He, the recluse, would interfere and would assert the power of Mind.

END OF VOL. II.

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ISIDORA
OR THE
ADVENTURES OF A NEAPOLITAN.

A NOVEL,
BY
THE OLD AUTHOR,
IN A NEW WALK;
AUTHOR OF "THE POPE AND THE COLONNAS,"
&c. &c. &c.

"C'EST L'AMOUR, L'AMOUR, L'AMOUR
QUE FAIT LE MONDE À LA RONDE."

IN THREE VOLUMES.
VOL. III.

LONDON:
SAUNDERS AND OTLEY, CONDUIT STREET.

1841.



ISIDORA.

CHAPTER I.

THE PROPHECY.

Moi jaloux ! qu'a ce point ma fierté s'avilisse !
Que j'éprouve l'horreur de ce honteux supplice !
Moi ! que je puisse aimer comme l'on sait hair !
Quiconque est soupçonneux invite a le trahir.
Je ne suis point jaloux..... si je l'étais jamais—
Si mon cœur.... Ah ! chassons cette impertune idée.

VOLTAIRE'S ZAIRE.

ANWHILE Osmanna stood fixed to the spot
which the Recluse had left her. Half-
formed thoughts crowded upon her mind as
she pondered over all that had passed between

her and the saintly bearer of the cross. Again had she been warned against uniting her lot to that of Bernardo:—warned, too, by one who was supposed never to speak without authority. But yet, he had said nothing positively against her lover:—and even had he so spoken, she would have loved him still. True it was that he was often harsh and even savage towards her: but this was only during his fits of passionate jealousy; and did not that very jealousy prove his love? The thought was flattering to her vanity; although, at the same time, she regretted that he did not put in her that unbounded confidence which she had sometimes fancied to be the great happiness of wedded life. Could she not promote such a feeling by resisting his tyrannical jealousy? She had already attempted to do so, during their last interview, when he charged her with having bestowed upon some other favourite the gold which she withheld from him. Was she not

ht in resisting so insulting an accusation ?
d he bore her taunts tolerably well. No
abt that he might so be taught to have full
fidence in her. He was much older than
; and the jealousy of old men was so ridi-
ous ! She would teach him to confide in
;—to feel that they had but one heart and
e mind between them ; and then how happy
ey would be !

Her thoughts were beginning to run on in
s more cheering train when she was
rtled by the approach of the stout trader
om she had seen in the morning. He too
vanced from the shore of Amalfi, and with
g strides pressed up the steep side of the
l. He was close to the girl ere, looking up,
perceived her ; when he instantly stopped,
d laying his hand on his breast said
Thanks to the God of Abraham ! I see the
etty girl who was with Bernardo Accorto
is morning. Thou wilt guide me to the
esence of the beautiful ladies in the house

yonder; thou dost wait upon them, dost thou not?"

"What shouldst thou have to do with such as them?" asked Osmanna tartly, looking proudly down upon the despised Israelite.

"What, my pretty one? Say rather what would they do without me. How would they deck themselves out in finery less bright than their own charms, unless the trading Jew supplied them with the means?"

"Thou a trader!" exclaimed Osmanna.

om Bernardo favoured. She, therefore, continued the dialogue in a more mild and conciliatory tone.

It is getting late for thy appeal to the
es," she said. "But if Bernardo speaks
thee, I doubt not they will examine thy
ds."

They are very beautiful and noble ladies,
they not?" asked the trader.

Presume not too far, Jew;" answered
nanna. "What can the beauty of
ristian dames import to such as thee?"

Nay; I only asked that I might know
at style of goods to offer them: and me-
aks that a friend of Ibra—of Bernardo
corto might assist a poor man with some
rice."

Nay, if that be the only object of thy
quiry, I will tell thee. They are both more
utiful than any thy sight has ever been
ssed with:—particularly the Signorina
dora."

"Donna
namest her
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"Thinkes
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"She does
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humbly; or
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noble ladies."

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"Stuffs of si
C. . .

have heard; and she is obliged to select colours that may contrast with it."

"It is a colour of good omen," replied the trader drawing himself up. "And the other girl, what is she like?"

"Anything in thy pack will suit her," answered Osmanna, not observing, in her enthusiastic feelings towards her mistress, the trader's disrespectful manner of speaking of her. "Anything in thy pack will suit her. Gold or silver brocade or the plainest linen:—her dark brown eyes and hair and her clear transparent skin will be equally beautiful under any dress. No one would look at the dress when a face like hers crowns it."

"By Al— by Abraham, I mean, but I am impatient to behold this hour!"

"This what?" exclaimed Osmanna. "I have warned thee twice before to speak more respectfully of the ladies."

"I will do so, my pretty lass; and if I prosper in my undertaking, thou thyself shalt be

rewarded. But I marvel why that fellow tarries so long !”

“Who?” asked Osmanna indignantly.

“Thy Bernardo. Methinks he must have gone on to the house by the other road. I will push on. Wilt thou also return with me?”

“Not so;” replied the girl, much displeased that an accursed Jew should have dared to apply the term “fellow” to her Bernardo: “Not so; I will wait here and tell the fellow how thou requitest his conduct.”

shoulders. His mind was, in no way, soothed from the irritation he had felt against Os-manna when he had before parted from her: and now, as he caught a glimpse of the Jew leaving her, all the violence of his nature again awoke within him. He walked slowly up to her, however; and spoke in so calm a tone that she began to congratulate herself upon the manner in which she had resisted his jealous accusation; and doubted not that, by following the same course, she would succeed in tutoring him into confidence ere long.

"So, *bella ragazza*," he said; "so thou hast remained in the same spot. A goodly thoroughfare it is for those who are looking out for all comers. What sayest thou of the Jew? Is he not a gallantly spoken infidel?"

"In truth, that he is, Bernardo; he was chatting here for some while, waiting for thee."

"And yet he hastened away so soon as he

OSMANNA

I FINE JOUR

CHAPTER 11

combat the fi

answered, "

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"Purple and coarse-visaged though I be," she said tauntingly, while her heart beat painfully with suppressed anger; "there be others, as thou sayest, who think differently of me. If I am as ugly as thou sayest, what need is there of so much jealousy?"

"Corpo di Dio!" cried Bernardo dragging her close to him and clutching hold of the chain which Consalvo had just cast over her neck. "What trinket is this?—the wages of guilt from the false Jew? Speak, woman, on thy life!"

"Who knows but it be!" answered Osmanna now waxing in anger equal to his own. "Who knows but it be! He was a civil-spoken man and a handsome. Whoever it was that gave it to me, he warned me against a ruffian, named Bernardo Accorto."

"He did so, did he?"

"Aye, that he did, Ha! ha! ha!" answered Osmanna laughing hysterically.

"Carry thy laughter and thy treachery to

hell!" cried Bernardo suddenly drawing forth the long knife from his bosom and plunging it into her chest. "Am I to be duped and to be made a laughing-stock?"

Osmanna reeled beneath the blow; and exclaiming "Oh, Bernardo, what hast thou done!" sank upon the ground at his feet.

Bernardo gazed at her stupidly, but still enraged: "Was I patiently to endure the avowal of thy guilty commerce with the first comer?" he said in a tone half revengeful, half exculpatory.

She lay still and exhausted. Bernardo moved not; spoke not: he hung over her, stupified as he had appeared to be just after the fatal blow. Osmanna made an effort to speak again. "Thy hand," she said; "I do not feel it.—Tell padre Consalvo to pray for me.—Talk to him, Bernardo;—and think of Osmanna."

A long pause ensued. The lips of the dying girl moved slowly: at times, disconnected words of prayer faltered out from between them. Then she lay again quite still and motionless. Then a tremor passed over her limbs: she half started up, and in a loud voice exclaimed, "Santa Maria, mother of God, pray for us sinners now and at the hour of our death."*

The quivering that convulsed her limbs passed away: and she fell heavily back upon the rock.

* This is the conclusion of the Ave Maria, the familiar prayer of all Catholics.

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denly fell bri
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bloody knife in h
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and bright. He
taking no the

walked briskly along the path towards the mansion of Donna Giulia.

But for the delay occasioned by this incident, he would have reached the house before the Recluse had left it for the night ; and the course of our narrative might have been materially different.

CHAPTER II.

THE GARDEN.

"But when that orb of Thine
Had clomb to the mid concave, then broad light
Was flung around o'er all those girding cliffs.

ter; full of the conviction that knowledge
power, and that he, an unaided old man,
about to thwart the attempts of brute,
tored, force, whatever they might be—he
de stoutly towards the mansion; resting
adly on his lofty cross, and firmly striking,
every step, its iron-shod staff against the
e rock that formed the path. The same
rus of canine voices, that had hailed his
t visit to the house, soon again greeted him;
l, being informed that the noble ladies he
ught were still in the terraced-garden, he
sed through a side-door in the court-yard
ll and sought them there.

Beautiful accompaniments and extensions
the houses were the trim gardens of those
s: with their flights of steps, their balus-
les, their statues, their vases, and their
ne-bound walks, that harmonised with the
hitecture of the mansion which they envi-
ed. There was, indeed, little nature in
m; not more than in the saloons of the

house: but people sought not for nature either in the one or the other; they were satisfied with convenience and architectural harmony. Those who, for the sake of nature, place their dwelling-houses amid broken glades, and "untortured" scenery, should, if they would be consistent, dispense with dwelling-houses altogether; and, like the beasts and birds of the forest, climb in a state of nature among the boughs, or crouch romantically in clefts and caverns. Trim gardens are as natural as trim houses, whether of stone, brick, or plaster.


the Recluse as he descended, with wonted majestic pace, towards them. He was soon discovered; and an exclamation of joy, from both ladies, greeted his unexpected approach.

"Ye may well rejoice to see me," he loudly exclaimed. "But down, down on your knees and implore the blessing of the cross that ye may be saved from impending dangers."

"The blessing of the good Consalvo must be ever gratefully received;" said Isidora, bending one knee and gently pulling down Donna Giulia, who appeared not to approve the domineering manner of her visitor.

"Signor Consalvo," she said, rising after the heavy cross had been solemnly waved over them, "you are more commanding than the Emperor himself. Isidora and I found him a most gallant and devoted knight."

"I speak in the name of the Emperor's Emperor," replied the Recluse gravely. He then struck the staff of his cross into the gravel walk, and supporting himself by its



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"Per Bacc
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Alfonso certain
some as we are
and he is a com

Consalvo at length. "They might, indeed, well tempt the barbarians—"

"Tempt barbarians!" exclaimed Giulia. "Ungracious hermit; bethink you that we have been used to courtly language of late. Even Isidora—"

"Isidora, my child," pursued Consalvo slowly: "thou art changed since I brought thee hither. The beauty of the child has given place to the beauty of the woman."

"Ha! ha! he can see, after all," began the Duchess, when Isidora, stepping forwards, raised the hand of the old man and affectionately carrying it to her lips, said, "Let me thank you, again and again, holy Consalvo, for having conducted me to this place. Donna Giulia has been to me a most kind sister; and, through your means, I have known safety and happiness."

"May it ever be so, my child!" answered Consalvo disengaging his hand: then laying it on the top of her head he added "May the

God in heaven watch over thee and ever grant thee happiness and safety!" He bent forwards; and tenderly kissed that beautiful head, where the glossy hair, divided on each side, showed the pure white skin between. Isidora herself was tall: and bowed her head as the majestic old man bent over her. It was a picture for a poet, for a saint to contemplate: the commanding figure of the old man in his flowing robes and leaning his left arm on that lofty cross; the graceful height of Isidora with her beautiful and

le she exclaimed, "My dear, good padre consalvo; now that you have shown yourself human, I am sure that you will grant my request I am going to make. No one opposes me, you know—not even the Emperor: it was I who obtained from him the investiture of this place for the Count of Sclafani—"

"The grant of Amalfi to the Count?" asked the Recluse quickly. "Has it been referred to him?"

"It has, revered Signor Consalvo," said Donso stepping forwards. "I have to thank the opportune intercession of the Abbess with the Emperor. The deeds were signed ere his Majesty left Bologna."

"Now then for my request," continued Donna Giulia. "When you brought this Isidora to me, you did not tell me she was acquainted with my kinsman, Donso: however, I soon found out—for

the little chit cannot keep her own secrets— I soon found out all about it, and that you had forbidden them to wed before he should have recovered his possessions. Now I want this prohibition to be removed. He has recovered Amalfi, as you hear; and the courts of Naples, to which the matter has been referred, are busy with the remainder.

“Whether they award me justice or deprive me of my patrimony, I see not what more I can do to recover them,” interposed Alfonso. “I have exhausted the justice

Trust to my honour, my love, my family
le, that no exertions will be wanting on
part," added Alfonso earnestly.

The Anchoret spoke not, but again gazed
them long and steadily. The eyes of
lora now no longer met his; they were
t down; and her face, neck, and arms
re overspread with a blush that crims-
ed even the spot between those ring-
ts of brown hair upon which his lips had
st pressed.

"What sayest thou, Isidora?" at length
ked Consalvo calmly.

She felt that his enquiring eye was still
on her: she felt—for she dared not look
—that Donna Giulia was enjoying her
nfusion: she hesitated a moment: then cast
rself into the arms of Alfonso and buried
r face and her blushes on his ample chest.

"Ha! ha! ha! The very best answer that
uld be given!" the Duchess trilled forth
ith her own inimitable sweetness. "Come,

padre Consalvo," she said, taking hold of his two hands and pulling him towards them. "Come; no refusal, no harshness; put your arms round them and embrace them both—for they seem to look upon you as a father; why, heaven only knows!"

She suited the action to the words; and raising the arms of the Recluse, who offered no resistance, she wrapped them round the two anxious lovers.

And here was another picture for a poet or

"Danger! Danger of what, or from whom? asked Alfonso, as Isidora again raised herself from his bosom.

"Danger of thy Bernardo, Count of Procida."

"You are prejudiced against the poor fellow, father: he has followed me faithfully for years."

"Hear me," said Consalvo: "thou didst send him, two years ago, to Rome to raise money for the exigencies of the Imperial cause in Naples. He procured that money. I saw him at Ostia deliver it over to a Barbary corsair, named Sinan, who is nearly as much known and dreaded on these seas as is his master, Barbarossa. I had no means to interfere: but I have since taxed him with the treachery."

"Hence his enmity to your reverence," interposed Alfonso: "he declared to me that he had been robbed of the money."

"The troubles and the sackage of Rome

prevented the creditor from applying to thee," resumed the Anchoret. "I named it not, because the fellow expressed deep repentance, which might be sincere : but I cautioned thee to beware of him when I first saw thee in the chamber of Isidora. I have judged, at times, since then that he faithfully served me and Isidora : I now judge that he did so only with a treacherous intent."

"What fear you, then, at present?" asked the Duchess.

break it up to attack a single country-house."

"No; not even though it contain Isidora de' Massimi and Giulia of Gonzaga," interposed the latter gaily. "Besides, Sorrento and Amalfi, on each side of us, are strong towns. We could not be more safe in the interior of the kingdom. No; no: padre Consalvo; you are only seeking an expedient to put off the wedding of which we were speaking. When shall it take place? I give notice that I will not leave this house until it has been solemnized—aye in the very church of Amalfi. Remember that you gave your consent in that holy embrace. I will not allow reverend Hermits to embrace my little friend for nothing—she might as well be a captive of Barbarossa at once."

"My children, I did consent," answered the Recluse slowly. "If I at first forbade ye to wed until the Count had recovered his birthright, it was because ye were both so

young: it was to secure ye time to become acquainted with one another's characters: it was to give him a motive for manly exertion—that he might not quietly and tamely sit down with the stigma of a traitor upon his name. A few months of trial have given fixedness of character to each; and ye are still attached to one another, as I foreknew, from the first moment, that ye would be. The Count of Procida has done all that can be done to recover his lands: the grant of this place by the Emperor himself proves that he is consi-

was in his manner towards Isidora a tenderness, an affection, which Donna Giulia marked with surprise. The lovers were too much engrossed with themselves to observe this; but it was not lost upon the light-hearted woman of the world who treasured up her observations for future investigation. The lovers, also, were too magnanimous to attach much importance to the Anchoret's statement of the wealth of Isidora: not so the woman of the world; her ears drank in the words, and she already imagined the gay and splendid establishment which the union would open to her. Sincerely, also, she rejoiced in the unexpected good fortune of her friend; although she could, in no way, guess whence it was derived. She would have interrogated Consalvo immediately had she not been withheld by habitual respect for his character. She consoled herself, however, by whispering to Alfonso—"A mystery! How delightful, here is another mystery! Unless, indeed, the old Hermit has gone crazy!"

This unguarded and unpremeditated word was not, however, without its influence upon the future destinies of all. The idea that his known enthusiastic temperament might have, at length, affected his understanding, led both her and the Count to attach less weight than they would have otherwise done to Consalvo's renewed cautions respecting Bernardo. These he again attempted to instil into them; but was again and again overpowered by the thoughtless raillery of the Duchess.

rento and Amalfi. Besides ; what you say, holy father, is the very strongest recommendation to poor Bernardo. He knows of all the untold wealth of dear Isidora ; and perhaps he is bringing the Jew to us that we may deck her out like a princess royal. I pray to the Madonna that it be so ; in order that we may celebrate the wedding with due pomp at Amalfi. When that is over, we will move our quarters : till then—no—no—no !" she reiterated gaily.

A pause of some minutes ensued. It was not likely that either of the lovers should propose to leave the place when such an inducement was held out to them to remain. The faith of the Recluse himself was shaken by the pertinacious assurances of the lady. Perhaps he had judged too harshly of Bernardo : perhaps he had received too readily the insinuations of Massaniello. While he hesitated, the Duchess exclaimed "There is one move, however, that I consent to make :

evening is come on apace while we have been discussing these matters : and I, therefore, invite you all to follow me back to the house, as the hour of supper approaches. Come, holy padre; come and take a cheerful cup of wine to banish all these dark fancies and to drink to the happiness of the betrothed."

"Lady, I will pray for their happiness, instead. I may not gainsay thy resolve respecting my fears: but I will make further enquiry in the neighbourhood. This night I

will rest with a good priest of Amsalé, where I

Isidora as he was turning away, the young man led the Recluse to the neighbouring gate. They were soon out of sight as they wended their way down the rocky and uneven path, overhung with ivies and wild flowers, which cast their chequered shade on the bright moonlight that now silvered the cliffs. Donna Giulia passed her arm into that of her friend, and led her back towards the house. The hearts of both were full; and ere they turned into the court-yard, Isidora paused on the highest terrace of the garden, and, gazing on the beautiful scenery around, above, beneath, cast herself into the arms of her friend and exclaimed, amid convulsive sobs, "Oh, Giulia, dear Giulia, how beautiful the world is! How happy I am!"

The Duchess fondly returned the embrace, and showed that she understood and participated in her feelings. Then locked in each other's arms, they again moved towards the courts. The loud barking of the many dogs,

who always lay about the yard suddenly startled them: and, anxious to discover who was the stranger who sought the house at so unusual an hour, they quickened their steps and passed forth from that enchanting garden.

Bright will be thy lot in life, beautiful and beloved Isidora, if thou dost not often look back to that evening walk along those stone-bound terraces as the sweetest hour of thine earthly existence!

And yet, at that same hour, the still warm corpse of the innocent and ingenuous Os-

CHAPTER III.

THE JEW.

Blest were the days when peddling Jews—
Traders in finery and news—
Pass'd o'er the land from cot to hall,
Expected, sighed for, cheered by all !
When peasant's wife and lordly dame
Donned their old kerchiefs till they came
Beneath new packs bowed proudly down.
Slowly the wished-for goods were shown—
The newest fashions fresh from town—
While ready wit proclaim'd whate'er
Had chanced to neighbours far and near.
The pack once op'd—'twas rifled o'er—
The household gathered round the door—
What wealth untold bestrew'd the floor !
What joys were those ! The store was bought :—
The scandal was detailed for nought.
Those were the gladsome days of trade.
Those were the days for wife and maid—
Those were the days for married men—
No "shopping" bills or dunns were then !

THE FORGOTTEN RECORD.

PASSING into the court-yard of the mansion,
the two ladies perceived a stranger who was

marked as a Jew by the badge in his cap. The dogs were all barking around him; while Bernardo Accorto, bending under a heavy pack, was calling them off by name and endeavouring to silence them. So soon as the Duchess and her friend stepped from the garden door, the stranger moved towards them; and greeted them with the lowly reverence of the children of Israel and of all eastern people.

“ I fear me,” he said, “ that it is a late hour

of which to intrude into this fortunate abode:

Donna Giulia. "Come into the hall, Jew; and thou shalt show us thy wares while supper is serving."

"Tut! tut!" she continued to Isidora, in answer to some remonstrance; "never thou fear. Old Consalvo's wits were gone astray this evening. We will discover the designs of this terrible person, if he have any other than those tending to the sale of his goods; which I do not believe."

They passed into the hall. Bernardo silently laid the pack on the floor and opened it, while lights were brought. The two ladies looked at one another in surprise on beholding clearly the features of the stranger. His tall, commanding, rather stout figure; his easy and self-confident carriage; his coal-black beard and moustaches, with his bold and piercing dark eyes, were not the usual attributes of the persecuted race of Hebrews. His loose frock was plain, but handsome; and a dagger of unusual length, whose han-

dle, instead of being covered with velvet, appeared to be of solid gold, was thrust into his girdle. He gazed full and enquiringly at the ladies when the lights were first brought in; and it was only the falling of their eyes beneath his own ardent glance that seemed to remind him of the impropriety of his demeanour. He instantly altered his bold look of admiration for casual and furtive glances; and in the modest, suggestive manner proper to his calling, assisted Ber-

shores of Barbary. But a brave heart can make itself a home every where; particularly when in the presence of beauty which, until now, I had thought irradiated equally every land."

"Thy speech is bold for a wandering outcast of so accursed a tribe," said Isidora, with the stern feeling of the times — piqued by what she deemed the presumptuous boldness of the Jew.

"It shall be ever humble before you, fair lady," answered the stranger, again casting down his eyes and turning to Donna Giulia, who was already busied in examining the various goods which she pulled out of the pack with all the zest of a modern belle at Howell and James's repository of fashion. But in the pack of the Jew, every article seemed to be of equal splendour, of unrivalled richness.

"Where couldst those pick up such exquisite articles!" she exclaimed. "Why here

be more ornaments of pearls and gold than the Duke of Ferrara possesses! And this beautiful Cashmere shawl! And this charming brocade!"—

"I used to think them of price, most noble lady; although they now appear unworthy of her for whom they were destined," answered the trader.

"Check his bold speech, dear Giulia," said Isidora drawing her friend partly aside.
"Surely it is unbecoming in a Jew!"

"Nonsense, child! a Jew has eyes as well

Just one upon her beautiful hair, I truly hope that she would admire the effect."

"Let me try them on thee, Isidora. Do, they will become thee;" exclaimed the Duchess.

"I would hope that the noble Signorina approves of the picturesque style of eastern dress; since I perceive that her waist adorns a chain of oriental workmanship which the good Mussulmen would esteem an amulet of unspeakable price and sanctity."

"Let it, then, preserve me from observations which I cannot but think mis-suited in one of thy class when addressed to a noble Christian maiden," replied Isidora proudly.

The trader turned, with a haughty but repented manner, towards the lady of Gongaza who had shewn more forbearance towards his intrusiveness than the delicacy of Isidora allowed her to feel. His manner had, however, been far more submissive towards herself than towards her friend. He had dis-

covered at once the different characters of the two; and had striven to adapt his language to the inclinations of each. Isidora, however, was pained by the inconsiderate concession of Donna Giulia, and grew more and more reserved as the trader waxed bolder in his bearing and address.

“And see—see, Isidora,” exclaimed the Duchess; “see these beautiful embroidered kerchiefs of gold and silk! Was ever thing more beautiful? And this veil! w

and I came by it as a bargain, so that I am able to sell it for less than the usual price."

"That necklace!" cried Donna Giulia gazing in rapture on the splendid string of pearls. "Why every pearl is worth a knight's ransom: — so round, so white, so large. Nay, nay:—whatever the price may be, it is beyond our means: — notwithstanding the Hermit's assurances," she added, archly looking at her friend. "Put it away, Bernardo; put it away, ere it tempt us beyond endurance."

"These beautiful velvets, lady," continued the Jew as he took back the rejected necklace; "they are embroidered with a taste and richness worthy of your elegance. A lady should never wear anything but velvets, satins or laces; with the addition of furs for the winter. A shawl of Cashmere, such as this, might, indeed, be permitted to those who, like your nobleselves, have height and grace of figure to carry it."

“What beautiful daggers!” cried Donna Giulia: “see their hilts are adorned with the most precious gems! What need of daggers have ladies?”

Bernardo hastily felt for his own: then furtively drew back his hand, and glanced round the room to mark if any one had observed him.

“Surely, dear Giulia, thou hast selected enough!” exclaimed Isidora; “the supper has been long since announced; and I should

lay at Sorrento. He has made me his friend for life by bringing me here. But now, as your evening repast is announced, let me not, for the world, detain you. Put up these things quickly, Bernardo," he added pushing the glittering brocades towards him with his foot. "Thou shalt call to-morrow and settle for those which the Signora Duchessa has selected. I would not detain her now on any account."

"Be it so, my good man," said the lady—now as anxious as the Jew himself appeared to be, to close the transanction before the Count should return. "There are only these four, five—no seven articles : and I *must* have this beautiful Spanish mantilla—it is so becoming : that will make eight articles. What is the price? what did we say was the total? —Five hundred and seventy ducats! so it was! Tell the Major Duomo to pay thy friend, Bernardo ; and never let me see him again, or I shall totally ruin myself."

"You punish me in a manner for which all your purchases cannot make compensation to me," gallantly replied the trader. With lowly respect he then inclined himself to Isidora, and making Bernardo, who seemed anxious to draw back, precede him, he drew himself up to the full height of his portly figure and slowly quitted the room.

Ere they had crossed the eastern court, after receiving, without counting it, the gold which Bernardo received from the Major Duomo, he silently fell into the rear of the Israelite, and they more quickly advanced along a path leading to the eastern shore of the promontory. The moon still shone with undimmed and unsullied brightness: and Bernardo was mindful to direct his companion to follow a track different from that by which they had sought the house, lest the corpse of poor Osmanna should be prematurely discovered. Other words the murderer spoke not: he appeared to go through his occu-

pation with a heavy, perhaps a sulky, dulness—as if displeased with himself for having yielded to a fit of jealous passion; but not less displeased with his victim for having aroused it. This change from his usually loquacious temper, his companion appeared not to remark: for when they had walked briskly forward, for a few hundred paces, the latter exclaimed, without stopping, but striking his hand against his thigh, with a force that produced a clanging iron sound,

“Allah Akbar! but she is more beautiful than a gazelle! Never was such a perfect houri!”

“Which of the two does your Highness mean?” asked Bernardo.

“Which? the younger one, doubtless. The other is destined for the Sultaun: and far be it from me,” he said placing his hand humbly on his forehead, “far be it from me to interfere with his revered pleasures!”

“I thought your Highness would admire

the one whom I had looked out for your harem. Had you not risked the adventure yourself, I had, as I said, intended to carry her over to Tunis for your approbation."

"I should have held it good service, Ibrahim," answered the pretended trader. "Never did I see a creature more lovely! Her very scorn of the pretended Jew went to my heart:—it showed her modesty, her courage, her delicate sense of honour."

"I marvel that your Highness should have

very beautiful: very. She will suit his Highness the Sultaun:—aye, and I doubt whether she will much dislike the life of the harem. Would to Allah, that I were equally sure of the submission of my little Isidora!”

“If she prove restive, or if your Highness tire of her, she has a lover in this country who will give untold wealth to ransom her,” suggested Bernardo.

“Remember, slave, that thou speakest of her who delights the eye of thy master,” answered the pretended trader with oriental assumption. “The high destiny that now awaits both those ladies calls for thy utmost respect. See that thou yield it.”

“On my head be it,” answered Bernardo humbly. “I would, however, suggest that the blow should be struck quickly. I met this morning a cursed Hermit or Marabout whose evil eye is upon me. It has already smitten me with misfortune,” he answered while he shivered, as he thought of Osmanna.

"The deed shall be done at once," answered his leader. "Our ships make no impression on Pozzuoli, and word has been brought this day that the Emperor Charles is really fitting out an expedition to attack Tunis. Donna Giulia must be sent off to the mighty Soleyman forthwith, to propitiate his favour and induce him to send us strong reinforcements."

While thus speaking, they rapidly descended by a goat-path to the silent shore. A boat lay

ay have conceived. At twelve to-morrow night, our people shall advance; be thou ready to introduce them into the house. Take heed, above all, that the ladies are not unnecessarily molested."

Humbly and reverently the Italian raised his hand to his brow in token of his willing obedience. The skiff shot round towards the concealed cavern; and he remained alone on the beach.

Yes, he was alone at length—for the first time since he had shed the blood of her whom he truly loved. For a while, he paused irresolute: then, turning quickly round, rushed wildly up the side of the mountain as if to escape from solitude, reflection, and himself. Arrived at the point where the two roads separated, he again paused in doubt. Should he follow that by which he had just conducted the stranger or that which would lead him to the spot where *she*—vain thought!—where *it* lay? He hesitated. A strong desire to look

again upon the face of his victim drew him in the one direction ; while fear of discovery, fear even of the inanimate thing he had made, deterred him. After a few minutes' struggle, the fears got the better of him : and he again rushed forwards to the mansion.

On entering the hall, he heard a page enquiring for Osmanna, and the other servants were expressing surprise that she had not, for some hours, been seen. All immediately turned towards Bernardo and asked if he knew whither she was gone.

"How should I know?" he sulkily answered : and a sudden thought that he might turn off any future suspicion from himself and even direct it so as to gratify long-cherished aversion and vengeance, impelled him to add "The last time I saw her, she was with the holy Consalvo, as ye call him."

He stretched out his two fingers in the manner necessary to give them the cabalistic power of a charm, and, after hastily swal-

lowing some large cups of wine, slunk unnoticed to his pallet. No further enquiry was made for the missing one: it being, at once, supposed that Consalvo had sent her upon one of his mysterious errands.

Meanwhile the Count of Procida had returned home after seeing the Recluse safely lodged with the good priest at Amalfi: and great was the regret that he expressed on hearing that the suspected Jew had visited the house during his short absence. Donna Giulia, however, assured him that there was no ground whatever for Consalvo's suspicions; that the Israelite was a handsome, well-spoken man, who had the loveliest things to sell that were ever seen; and that they were, moreover, remarkably cheap. "He was a great deal too good-looking and too courteous to be the mean traitor the Hermit would have us believe. Besides," she added; "consider that, if we leave this place, flying from we know not what, thy marriage with Isidora

will be deferred until the saints will it. I have obtained the old man's consent once: it is for thee to take advantage of it."

"My dear and beautiful kinswoman," answered Alfonso, "thou art my very guardian angel, who dost obtain the fulfilment of my every wish. Happy am I to forget the Jew and every one else to think only of thee and Isidora."

"Spoken like a gallant knight!" exclaimed the Duchess. "Let us, therefore, settle when the ceremony shall take place, that we may be all agreed before the old Recluse comes back again."

"Let it be as soon as possible, beautiful Giulia," said Alfonso: "for I have just heard in Amalfi the corroboration of a report, I before mentioned. It seems that the Emperor has really issued orders for a fleet to be assembled at Corsica to undertake this expedition against the Barbary corsairs. Every true knight in Italy—nay, in all Europe—will

throng under his banners to strike a blow against the Infidels. I must be there also: and we have already suffered so much from absence, that I trust, my Isidora, thou wilt allow me to call thee mine ere we again part?"

He took both her hands in his and gazed into her eyes with that sweet appealing look that has power to irradiate the most unexpressive features. Either Isidora was unable or unwilling to resist the increased charm which it received from the noble and animated countenance of the Count of Procida. She spoke not; but replied in one of those talismanic ways understood by lovers. Alfonso snatched a kiss upon her blushing cheek, and turning gaily to the duchess exclaimed "Well, Cousin, when is it to be?"

"I have been calculating," replied the fair lady with a novel, because a rather grave, expression. "It shall be next Saturday week. It is the feast of my patron saint—Santa Giulia. So have I decided. Nay, I will hear

no appeal, Isidora. And to-morrow morning, the very first thing, I will send people to seek out this good Jew again. There was a beautiful dress embroidered with small pearls which I must have to wear on the occasion. But Santa Maria, see here Isidora," she cried, returning to a side-table: "see, he has left that splendid necklace of pearls that I so coveted! Here it is, lying on the veil I selected for thee. It must have been forgotten by mistake: so that we may be sure he will

CHAPTER IV.

THE DISCOVERY.

This is the man should do the bloody deed.
The image of a wicked heinous fault
Lives in his eye: that close aspect of his
Does show the mood of a much troubled breast.

SHAKSPEARE.

It was late on the following morning ere Consalvo Berretta—who had been detained by the obsequious respect of the people of Amalfi, who had seldom an opportunity of thronging round him for worldly and spiritual counsel—it was late ere he again took his way towards the mansion on the hill. The day was as beautiful as the lovely month of May could

make it; the sun as bright as those favoured shores ever beheld it. The Recluse walked slowly but proudly: all the fears which he had before expressed for the safety of the ladies had vanished, or were rather overpowered by the triumphant feeling engendered by the news he had heard of the Emperor's intended expedition against Barbary, and by his own determination to join the forces of Christendom, and, once more, take sword in hand to war upon the Infidel. Full of military

There, in truth, still lay the body of the gentle-hearted Osmanna:—decked out in all the national gaiety in which he had beheld her on the evening before—full of life, of love, and of piety. There she lay unconscious, while the bright sun shone full upon them and yet dazzled not those open, but now fearful, black eyes. Her hair was neatly gathered on the crown of her head—all except the long jetty tresses which still curled stiffly over her pale cheeks. The silver chain—that chain and reliquary which he himself had so lately given to preserve her from evil—still bound her small brown throat. Her short white petticoat, flounced with red and gold stripes—her scarlet stockings with their golden clocks—her bodice of black velvet, bound with embroidery of scarlet and golden threads, and still fitting tightly to her full and neatly-turned bust—all lay unruffled and untarnished about her; all glittered gaily in the bright sunshine. In the neatly-drawn white shift within her gay bodice, was one bloody rent to

be seen. This alone told the tale of violence; for the blood had flowed inwards. And there she lay in her finery—an expression of pain and of prayer upon her now sallow cheeks—while the birds blithely twitted in the boughs above, and a shrill grasshopper sprang from the bare unconscious arm folded across her chest, and rustled back into the long grass as the Recluse approached.

“God in heaven, who can have done this foul deed!” he cried, casting himself on one knee beside her and laying his hand on her forehead:—it was cold as marble in January. He started up and looked eagerly and angrily around. The boughs on the opposite side of the path-way were parted; and a boy, about four years old, creeping beneath the branches, eagerly dragged forwards, by the hand, a hard-featured woman, in the slovenly dress of the wives of the fishermen on the coast.

“Come, do come on, Mamma mia,” cried the boy anxiously. “We have almost got there.”

He caught a sight of the Recluse as he spoke; and, darting back, hid his face in his mother's ample dress. The woman stood still as Consalvo strode towards her, and, grasping her by the wrist, exclaimed "Thou, Ninetta! Speak. What knowest thou of this fearful crime?"

"Santa Maria!" exclaimed the woman in a hard voice, "Why it is the bower-woman of the Signorina Isidora!"

"It is—it is. How came she here?" cried Consalvo with impetuosity.

"I will tell your reverence all I know about it," answered the woman, placing her two hands on the shaggy head which her boy thrust between her knees, while he stole furtive glances at the corpse:—"I will tell all I know about it. This plaguy boy, Cecco, has taken to wandering through the woods of late for hours; and not all that Massaniello or I can say will keep him at home. He was out all yesterday afternoon; and we hunted

him for an hour or two. At last he came back after it was dark, with his clothes all soiled and torn off his back. Judge, Signor padre Consalvo, if that was not enough to make a woman angry ! You may well suppose that when he began stammering something, I did not listen to him. No ; I gave him a sound beating and sent him to bed without his supper. His father went out with the boat, and we thought no more of the matter : he is not returned yet. This morning, however,

The boy, of course, would not speak when was asked to do so : but squeezed itself all closer among its mother's petticoats.

"He does not know, your reverence;" answered the mother; "and that was the reason I would not come sooner. He says that it was a Signore with a great pack on his shoulders."

"God will direct us," said the Recluse. Come on with me, woman, to the Palazzetto, I will send forth people to fetch the poor girl's body : but follow thou me with thy boy."

With unwonted haste and brandishing his staff cross wildly in the air, he strode on to the mansion.

"Horrid ! Horrid ! Horrid !" he cried as he entered the court-yard. "Murder has been done ! Horrid murder ! Follow all ! Follow all ! and God will declare the guilty one !"

Thus exclaiming at the full pitch of his powerful voice, he strode through the court and into the hall. The startled domestics and

followers of the family gathered as they heard the fearful cry swell along the passages of the house; and, with a mixture of fear and curiosity, crowded around the prophet. On he strode to the sitting-room usually occupied by the ladies; they were both there—bending over the purchases they had made the evening before.

“Murder! Murder! Horrid murder!” still exclaimed Consalvo bursting into the room.

“Murder! good heavens; do not alarm us

He then violently closed the door and placed his back against it. The crowd looked on with nervous, and yet not unpleased, anxiety:—people like excitement, even when occasioned by the horrid death of a companion:—who, when she reads the list of deaths in a modern newspaper, is not disappointed if she find not there the name of a friend or acquaintance? Bernardo had felt it incumbent upon him to follow the others; not expecting to be thus entrapped. He was observed to turn pale when the door was thrown to; but this was attributed to his natural emotion at the death of her whom he was known to love.

“Silence all!” cried Consalvo scanning the crowd with an eye that seemed to flash almost unnatural fire; “silence, while Heaven declares the guilty one. The murder was committed by no labourer, by no fisherman, but by one who bore a large pack on his shoulders!”

“Santa Maria, the Jew!” exclaimed Isidora.

"The Jew!" "The accursed Jew!" exclaimed a dozen voices, delighted to trace the crime to one of a race whom they supposed to be familiar with every iniquity.

Consalvo understood not the purport of the words, having left the house on the preceding night before the Jew had arrived. He gazed round enquiringly. Meanwhile the fisherwoman's child had intuitively gathered the object of the meeting; and, feeling himself of greater importance than he had ever before

"But now I think of it, it was he who carried the Jew's pack!" interposed Isidora with breathless precipitation.

"Bernardo Accorto! I thought so!" exclaimed Consalvo, striking the staff of his cross on the floor with a force that made every soul in the room start. "Accursed Infidel!—thief!—murderer!—Out of the mouth of babes!"—

"Hold, fool! Iettatore!" interposed Bernardo. "Every soul in this room knows that he loved the girl; that we were to have been married before many weeks."

He sobbed aloud; and real tears coursed down his cheeks.

"Poor fellow!" "It is very true!" exclaimed several voices. "It must have been the Jew." "The pack belonged to the Jew."

"Dolts!" thundered forth the Recluse. "What matters it to whom the pack belonged? It was he who bore it who did the deed. Seize him, I say: this is matter for the tribunals to investigate."

So great was the respect they all bore towards the Recluse that, although not one in the room believed that Bernardo could have been guilty of the crime, several of them moved towards him in obedience to the orders of their prophet.

"Back, slaves!" cried Bernardo. "Do ye think that I will lie in prison at the whim of a child and a raving Iettatore? Stop me who dare!" he said again drawing the fatal knife from his bosom. But a knife was no unusual sight to the beholders, and no one moved out of his way. Consalvo himself firmly placed himself against the door, and again struck the shaft of his cross upon the boarded floor. Bernardo stood still; hesitated a moment: then, shaking the knife in a threatening manner aloft to the wondering throng, darted backwards through the door of the bed-room which, as we think we have elsewhere said, opened into the saloon. He darted through this room in which Isidora was used to sleep,

and through the adjoining one, which was that of Donna Giulia; and which communicated with a back passage and dressing-room, whence a short winding stair-case led down to the gardens. Bernardo had long made it his business to study every corner of the premises; and, on reaching the garden, rushed direct to an unfrequented door in the high outward wall, which a clump of lemon trees concealed from general view, and of the very existence of which scarcely another person in the household was aware. The murderer had, therefore, no difficulty in passing out into the open country and in so eluding his unwilling pursuers. Once in the copse, it was easy to creep along, beneath the over-hanging wood, to the beech. The secret cavern of the corsairs soon afforded him secure shelter.

It is unnecessary to describe the vexation of the Recluse, the silent sorrow of Isidora, and the exclamations of Donna Giulia. An-

grily the prophet reproached the Duchess with her disbelief of his warning voice when he had, only yesterday, cautioned her against Bernardo; and petulantly the spoiled and self-willed beauty lamented her hard fate, and declared she would never more doubt her monitor or any one else. The attendants had long since dispersed; and the squabble, if it might be so termed, was at length interrupted by their return with the body of the murdered girl.

"Come, let us" interrupted Canales, "we

may learn the value of its boasted health and beauty: there age may see the reward of all the ills it has patiently endured."

Isidora silently joined him and they left the room together.

CHAPTER V.

THE JUDGMENT.

"'There was a ship,' quoth he."

COLERIDGE.

have actually bartered his goods with the ladies, would have served still more to allay any suspicion that might have lingered in their minds respecting his real character. None such, however, had existed since the determination of the preceding night; and Barbarossa's fleet had been no longer mentioned save in congratulations that it was known to be retreating discomfited from Pozzuoli.

Suddenly, however, the mind of the Recluse was carried back to all its discarded forebodings. The fisherman, Massaniello, rushed breathless into the saloon in which he sat with the two ladies.

"Perdona, perdona, your reverence!" he cried, too much agitated to pray for the accustomed benediction. "But I have news to tell, and came off instantly."

"What is it, good fellow?" asked Consalvo. "Take breath."

"Indeed, I have need," answered the man.

"I have but just left my boat at Sorrento and I came hither directly. I met Ninetta and Cecco on the road ; but I would not even tarry to let her tell me all about this terrible murder : my curses on the Jew !"

"But it was not the Jew who did the deed," interposed the Recluse.

"No !" cried Massaniello. "Then, your reverence, it ought to have been him ; as you will say when I tell you all. I went out fishing last night as usual ; although it was

a sound was heard on board of her, except now and then the splashing of the oars ; and her masts shot up to the sky, and her spars and cables were stretched out in the bright moonlight, as plainly to be seen as the web of my nets when they are hung out to dry."

"Well, well, what does all this mean?" asked the Duchess impatiently.

"It means, most illustrious lady," continued the fisherman, "that no vessel now dares show itself in these seas excepting those of Barbarossa, whose fleet lies off Pozzuoli ; and that, therefore, the galley I speak of must have been one of his."

"All this is very true, my good man," said the Recluse ; "but still I see not how it particularly affects us."

"Santa Maria ! your reverence, because I have not told you all my story. You see, your reverence, although you are a great prophet, you must wait until the rights of a thing be told to you."

"Go on!" said Consalvo sternly.

"Well, then; as I was lying in the shade of the cliffs of Caprea watching my nets and that galley, I saw a boat glide up towards me that I knew, at once, was no fishing boat of this or any other, country. Eight stout fellows pulled the oars, as regularly and as silently as I used to see the sailors make old Andrew Doria's boats shoot across the bay during the siege. I suppose they did not see me, as I lay in the shade of the

Consalvo rose from his seat and paced the room in a nervous and thoughtful manner.

"I saw him as plainly as I see the tower of Salerno through that open window," continued Massaniello. "There he sat, and onwards they rowed: onwards—onwards as straight as a yard shaft for that Barbary galley. I watched the boat till it was lost in the shadow of the great hull; but I saw a lot of dark figures rise just after on the deck and stand out against the white sky. Now, Signora Duchessa," he added, "I had before told his reverence that I did not think that Jew was a Jew; and now it is proved that, at all events, he is a friend of these corsairs. I put back as soon as I had done my fishing, and ran up the mountain to tell you what I had discovered."

While Massaniello was dismissed with thanks for his considerate attention, the Recluse continued to pace the room. At

length, he stopped ; and enquired still further particulars of the language and bearing of the trader on the preceding evening. All was described most fully ; and when weighed in the scale of probabilities by the light of the now re-awakened suspicions, the conduct of the stranger was declared not to be that of any trading Jew : it was, on the contrary, fully agreed that he must be an emissary of the corsairs introduced into the house by Bernardo for sinister intentions which it was

now began to be fully appreciated: and increased horror of him was engendered by the thought that he had yielded to his master passion while the poor girl, whom he really seemed to love, lay, slaughtered by his hand, hard by.

The observations which the pretended Jew had made upon the chain which Isidora always wore, at her lover's request, were also repeated and studied. The characters on the splendid clasp were examined; but without throwing any light upon the subject: and it was again re-placed around that graceful waist.

"What was to be done?" was the next question that arose.

"What!" exclaimed the Recluse; "leave this place forthwith--this very day."

"To-day? Impossible!" cried Donna Giulia. "Alfonso is absent to-day, awaiting in Naples the decision of the courts of law upon his claims."

"And poor Osmanna lies unburied in the house," expostulated Isidora.

"The Barbary corsairs will not carry *her* off," said Consalvo with grim energy. "It is for the living—it is for thee and Isidora that they will attempt an onset."

"And the wedding?" said the Duchess. "I really cannot think of going for the next ten days. You have given your consent, holy Consalvo: and I am making all the preparations. See these beautiful brocades

taking his hand, "at all events, had we not better wait until to-morrow? It is long past noon now, and Alfonso will not return till late."

"I cannot and will not be hurried away to-day!" petulantly interposed Donna Giulia. "Besides, as the Jew, or whatever he is, has left the coast, and as Bernardo, who doubtless was to have let his party into the house, has been driven away, there can be no immediate danger. Certain I am that Alfonso will agree with me; and I shall not think of moving until I have heard his opinion."

She left the room as she spoke, with an air of pettish determination. Her words had, however, contained some shew of argument; and Consalvo allowed them to have weight in his mind. He could not, at all events, compel the lady to do that to which she was disinclined: and delicacy forbade him to think of carrying away Isidora, in whom he was more particularly interested, while her friend

remained in that which was believed to be a place of danger. In thoughts and in considerations such as these, the remainder of the afternoon wore away. Evening came, and sunset; and then, through the deepening twilight, the Count of Procida was seen slowly returning to the house.

“What news? What news? most noble lord of Procida?” cried the Duchess gaily, as he entered the saloon. “Have the courts dared to decide against us, that thou lookest

quitous! What said they to the Emperor's letters that you first brought from Spain?"

"Those, dear lady, I must again explain, were not admitted as evidence. The Emperor had referred the case to them to stand or fall on its own merits. They have decided."

"And the decision?" asked the Duchess angrily.

"That my property was forfeited, but that the permission first received from the Viceroy, de Lanoie, should avail to save my life." *

"Thy life!" cried Isidora: "I knew not that it was endangered!"

"It could hardly have been touched, dear

* "Alcuni di questi pretesi felloni ottennero che le lor cause fossero vedute per giustizia, siccome ottenne Michele Barone di Procida; e quella trattatasi in Napoli a 4 Maggio del seguente anno riportò sentenza conforme a quella del Marchese del Quadrato cioè che perdesse la roba, ma non la vita; onde Procida fu confiscata e fu data al Marchese del Vasto."—
Gian : Istor : civ : di Napoli.

one, after the favour which the Emperor had shown me in restoring this little fief."

"Favour indeed!" exclaimed the Duchess. "And I make no doubt that these righteous courts have confiscated Amalfi also?" she asked.

"Nay, fair Giulia, they would not dare to interfere with thy conquest," answered the Count struggling to overcome his depression. "Besides," he added, "this place was granted by the Emperor subsequently to the alleged treason:—a most irregular proceeding, but one for which thy winning address is responsible:—and was not submitted to their judicature."

He moved towards the Recluse who had sat motionless during the whole of this conversation—listening with fixed attention to every word that was said, but giving no sign of the effect produced upon his own mind.

"May I hope, holy Consalvo," said the

Count, "that this harsh decision will not occasion any change in the approbation of my suit to Isidora which you so kindly testified yesterday evening?"

Consalvo rose slowly from his seat. "I go to pray by the corpse of Osmanna," he said: "What answer thinkest thou the dead will suggest?"

He drew himself up majestically and quitted the room.

"The corpse of Osmanna!" ejaculated Alfonso. "What can he mean?"

"Oh, we have had such doings here to-day!" exclaimed the Duchess. "Osmanna has been found murdered by Bernardo; and Bernardo has run away and escaped, and stolen the precious string of pearls. And it is proved that the Jew was an impostor—a Barbary corsair—come to look at Isidora and me and to see if we were worth carrying off for slaves. And then a great fisherman came here, and told how he saw the Jew, as we

supposed him, go on board one of Barbarossa's galleys ; and how Bernardo was a partner of his. And here has old Consalvo been trying to persuade us to run away from we know not what, and to leave this place instantly without waiting for thy return ; but this I positively refused to do ; for if we once put off the wedding, it may never take place at all. And so I told him that I would not talk about it any more until thou shouldest return. And now," she ran on, scarcely allowing

has given me a dreadful head ache: and if we are positively to go back to Naples to-morrow, I shall not be fit to be seen unless I can get rid of it by a long night's rest. Addio caro; addio carina," she said affectionately embracing Isidora.

Both expressed a hope that to-morrow would see her restored to her usual health and spirits: and the two lovers were left alone.

Alfonso cast himself on a cushion at the feet of his mistress. "Knowest thou, dearest," he said, while he gazed up into her eyes with an expression of sad fondness, "knowest thou that I almost wish thou hadst followed the advice of the Recluse and hadst betaken thee to Naples this very day? All that Giulia has told me, in her hurried manner, is so very unusual that I fear me danger must threaten us, and I even feel a presentiment of evil; a feeling of care and of anxiety that weighs me down despite of myself."

“Nay
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would have been none the less, had I enjoyed the advantages which were my birthright. The world looks more to the end achieved than to the difficulties overcome. To my mind, the brave Antonio de Leyva, who has raised himself to renown from the rank of a common trooper, has achieved more glory than the Prince of Orange, than my competitor del Vasto, or than any of the hereditary leaders of the age: what then would not that man have done had he been born in our favoured ranks, with wealth, title and connexions to introduce him to notice? All these give an advantage of at least twenty years in the race for distinction and fame. And all these I have now lost: nay, I am even branded to the world as a traitor to my Sovereign. But I have thee, dearest," he continued less sadly: "and thy lot shall yet be a bright one!"

"Nay, Alfonso, bethink thee that it was not amid the pomps of the world that we first met. Amalfi, even, was not then thine; and

yet we loved. Cannot we suffice to one another?"

"He is indeed unworthy of thee who would seek his bliss elsewhere than in making thy happiness," exclaimed her lover. "But yet, my sweet one, this is an iron age. The home of a knight must be on the tented field: and it would be sweeter to be thought of by thee as a leader, then as a follower of other men. These, however, are bootless regrets. If they overshadow not thy love,

vel," she added, wishing to turn his thoughts into another channel, "I marvel that Giulia, with the praises of whose beauty all Europe resounds, has kept her heart free and unpledged to her many adorers."

"She has not long cast aside her widow's weeds," answered the Count. "Not," he added smiling, "not that I mean to say that grief for her husband—although she loved him as well as most women love their lords—preserved her feelings unfettered. But her surpassing loveliness, and, above all, her widely spread fame, deter the most self-satisfied nobles from seeking her hand. For once in their lives, modesty detains them. Again I say, how much there is in fame and exalted parentage!—thou art more beautiful than Donna Giulia,—far more lovely in my eyes—aye, in the eyes of all who should not have been prejudiced;—and yet the world bows it down humbly to its aristocratic idol

and marks not her whom God and nature alone have stamped with their own seal."

"Uncourteous, ungracious knight!" exclaimed Isidora. "Thine eyes, I fear me, were so engaged elsewhere that thou didst not regard all the homage I received. I am well nigh inclined to recite to thee a list of mine especial adorers—my Captains Schertel—my de Saluces—my Emperors even—to prove to thee that the world is not so blind to merit as thou dost deem it! But I will spare thee the pangs of jealousy, and will rather invite thee to take one more walk in that dear garden, as I fear that we shall all resolve to leave it to-morrow."

Who could hesitate to approve of the suggestion who saw, through the open windows, that silvery bay, and that bright moonlight sleeping on the white vases and statues that ornamented the terraces, and giving them an ærial and ghost-like appearance? The lovers passed through the yard, and entered the fairy scene.

"Alfonso," said the fair girl, "canst thou ever forget how beautiful this scene was last night? I felt, when the holy Consalvo joined our hands and embraced us both, I felt as though all my pains, all the trials I had endured for months were at an end, and as though all henceforth was to be peace, serenity, and happiness:—as though this blissful scene gave me a foretaste of that heaven which should reward our prayers and our confidence. Didst thou never feel as if this world, this life even, were a part of heaven?—as if thou couldst lift thyself up bodily and join the blessed saints without renouncing one single feeling or foregoing one single hope? as if they would receive thee with joy while thou shouldst blend with them in blissful and familiar companionship? Oh, surely such a scene as this would be heaven itself, could it but last for ever!"

"It is heaven, sweet one, and it will never alter while thou art here to look and to speak

thus thy dear poetic feelings. There is more poetry in thy nature, Isidora, than in all the chattering old men and women whom we met at the Casa Veronica! But tell me," he said as they now paced the northern end of the highest terrace—that nearest the house—"tell me what large vessel is that in the roads below? She was not here when I left, this morning."

Isidora gazed in the direction to which he pointed; and discovered, just rising above the bushes and evergreens that fringed the lower side of the garden, the tapering and lofty masts of a large ship. The hull itself was not visible; but the masts and spars showed that it must be of first-rate magnitude, as they glistened, like silver wands, in the still moonlight. The sails were mostly furled; and the tops even of the masts scarcely rocked with the motion of the tranquil sea.

"Santa Maria!" exclaimed Isidora; "I

never saw it there before ! How can it have come there ? What can it mean ?”

She paused a moment, and then exclaimed, as with a sudden thought, “ Good heaven, may it not be the Jew—the corsairs ?”

“ Do not alarm thyself, carina,” said Alfonso, with forced calmness. “ We are too near Amalfi for them to venture to land. The corsairs are all making the best of their way homewards : and it is more likely to be a Venetian galley come to watch their movements. Fear nothing. And see ; yonder, on the further terrace, is the good Consalvo, returning to the town by the path I showed him last night. I will accompany him and urge him not to throw any new obstacles in the way of that which, thou mayest well suppose, I have most at heart. At the same time, I will set the good folks of Amalfi to watch the motions of that same cruiser or whatever she is. Fare thee well ; I shall rejoin thee, my beloved, in half-an-hour. But go in doors, for the hour is getting late.”

He passed his hand round her waist :
snatched a hasty kiss : then bounded fr
terrace to terrace, and overtook Consalvo
he had reached the portal at the bottom
the garden.

CHAPTER VI.

NIGHT.

—“ Fear of the hurricane,
 And yet that greater scourge, the crafty Moor
 Who, like a tiger prowling for his prey,
 Springs and is gone, and on the adverse coast,
 (Where Tripoli, and Tunis and Algiers
 Forge fetters, and white turbans on the mole
 Gather whene'er the crescent comes displayed
 Over the cross) his human merchandize
 To many a curious, many a cruel eye
 Exposes. Ah, how oft where now the sun
 Slept on the shore, have ruthless scimitars
 Flashed through the lattice, and a swarthy crew
 Dragged forth, ere long to number them for sale,
 Ere long to part them in their agony,
 Parent and child !”

ROGERS.

THE fears which Isidora de' Massimi had expressed, in regard to the mysterious appear-

ance of the galley beneath the cliffs of Amalfi, were not, however, as groundless as her lover would have made them appear to her. At the moment when he parted from her to accompany Consalvo to his lodging for the night, two boats, well manned, and each of which was pulled by eight well-disciplined rowers, had touched the beach at Marinella; and their crews had silently mustered amongst the overhanging copsewood. Bernardo Accorto stood a few steps apart from the rest with Sinan; and conversed in an under tone.

fellow as a saint, a devotee, a madman, or a marabout!" exclaimed Sinan scoffingly.

"So do the fools in Italy!" answered Bernardo. "However, we must be stirring; and now, comrades," he continued, "listen to my directions and we shall succeed in the job. I will place a guard to every avenue to the house as we go on: but do thou, Selim, with two others," he said addressing one of the sailors, "do thou go by that path to the right. It is most likely that ye will fall in with the knight of Procida who will have been dancing attendance on the old marabout, as Sinan calls him. Strike down the youth and bind him: but do not slay him, for the world:—it is through him that we shall, hereafter, get a ransom for the girl. Leave him, therefore, bound on the road-side, and then hasten on, with all speed, along the north side of the garden wall till ye come to a small door. Watch there and prevent any one from escaping. There were few of the household who knew of it until I fled through it this morning. This may remind them of it. But

be heedful that ye take the northern garden wall ; 'as the southern would lead ye to the front court, which we mean to attack ourselves."

Having given these lucid directions to his turbanned followers, who disdained to adopt any disguise, Bernardo dismissed the three ruffians to their particular service ; and advanced silently up the hill with the main body.

Meanwhile the Count of Procida had accompanied the Recluse to the little town of

ever, he had spoken; "My son," he had said, "I gazed upon the corpse of Osmanna, and I asked it whether it harboured the spirit of a menial or of a princess; of one who had toiled to amass a few small coins wherewith to purchase a single pearl, or of one who had squandered, in the gratification of a passing whim, that which would have sustained a hundred families for months. I asked it whether it had been rich or whether it had been poor; whether it had fasted or feasted; whether it had lived in daily ease or in daily toil: I asked it all these things, and, to all my questions, it answered

"WHAT MATTERS IT? I AM A CORPSE."

"May I then," said the youth joyously, "may I then deem that your words imply"—

"Deem what thou wilt, but weary not me with thy thanks. Thy young hopes jar upon my soul: it is sad and anxious."

This stern rebuke produced silence for the remainder of their walk; and when they

reached the outskirts of the little town, the Count was dismissed with a solemn benediction of the cross. He hastened to the quarters of the coast-guard and anxiously enquired the character of the vessel in the roadstead. The guard had not heard of its being there; an advanced head-land sheltered it from the sight of those on the quay; and it might, therefore, have taken its station since night-fall. Alfonso urged the guard to be on the alert, and hastily and anxiously began to retrace his steps towards the mansion.

to raise an alarm, that might save her whom he loved, than to defend himself. His single hand, taken unawares, could, of course, do nothing against the three well-armed Infidels who attacked him. He was overpowered, and a handkerchief was tied over his mouth in an instant. No further injury was done him. His hands and his feet were bound; he was dragged aside amongst the brushwood that bordered the path, and left there alone.

His three captors roughly laughed to one another—no doubt at the facility of their conquest—as they moved cautiously away. The young knight's spirit chafed within him at the insult; but he soon caught the sound of a discussion amongst the barbarians which made him at once forget his own state. They were now near the spot where the north and south walls of the terraced garden descended almost to an angle; and a question seemed to have arisen amongst them as to their future road. They spoke in the *lingua franca*, or mixed dialect common to all traders in the Mediter-

anean ports, so that the captive had no difficulty in gathering their meaning.

"Now for the house!" said one: "this way!"

"Nay; but thou art wrong there, comrade," answered another. "Bernardo told us to keep the south side of the wall, and that he and the others would go round the other way."

"The south side I am certain it was," answered the third. "Dost thou not remember that we were to go on till we came to a door in the wall?"

At this moment, however, shrieks and cries arose from the mansion, and spread far through the still and placid night air.

"The Moors!" "The Moors!"

"Mercy! mercy!"

"O Dio!"

"O Madonna!"

"Barbarossa! Barbarossa! Help! help! help!"

All this Alfonso heard. Nay; was not that cry in the voice of Isidora! Should she be borne away while he lay basely bound within hearing of her appeals for help? With a frantic effort which dislocated his wrist for weeks, he burst asunder the bands which girt his hands. To clutch his dagger and sever the thongs that tied his feet was the work of an instant. He bounded to his legs, and dashed off towards the mansion. He remembered the discussion between the corsairs, and that the wicket in the northern wall was, consequently, unguarded. There he might rescue the ladies; there, at all events, he was

sure of obtaining an entrance. Never did he exert himself with such energy as that with which he now breasted the mountain and toiled towards the neglected wicket.

Thanks be to heaven, it was unguarded! He rushed against it and drove it open with the force of a Hercules. Oh joy! the figure of her whom he was speeding to save ran up to meet him and threw herself in his arms. Such was his first hope. But—no—no—no: it was Donna Giulia:—the beautiful Donna Giulia:—the admired of all Italy: the re-

What was to be done? Shrieks of terror still rang from the mansion; but could he abandon her who appealed to him for protection—her whose beauty was so renowned that the corsairs had, perhaps, even planned this incursion on purpose to secure her? And what would be her fate if she fell into their hands? His heart sickened as these thoughts rushed through his mind. As a knight, as a man, he could not leave her to her fate, even though Isidora herself might need his succouring arm. Besides, Isidora's fate was not certain:—the servants might make some defence:—Isidora, too, might escape.

“Be still, my heart!” he said in an audible voice. “Honour calls, and shall be obeyed. I will rescue thee, Giulia, or die in thy defence.”

He gazed down on the beautiful face that lay on his bosom, as pale as the very moonbeams that steeped it in unearthly loveliness, and fancied that a half-formed smile of gratitude acknowledged his determination. None

such, however, animated those passive, marble features. Renewed cries came from the house; he fancied even that he perceived figures pursuing the fugitive: he raised her in his arms, and bore her through the open wicket which he pulled to after him that it might afford no indication of his road. We have said that Donna Giulia was rather tall for a woman, and that Alfonso was of a slight and slim mould: although, therefore, the present occasion moved him to exertions of which he was not aware at the time, so that he remembered not even

delicious, now fanned her frame and recalled her suspended faculties. She opened her full blue eyes and gazed timidly around.

"Where am I?" she said. "Are they gone? Am I safe?"

"Thou wilt soon be so, my dear Cousin," answered Alfonso: "but now let us move on again. I fear what may have chanced to Isidora."

"Oh! do not leave, in pity do not leave me," cried the Duchess weeping like an infant. "I cannot walk; indeed I cannot; these sharp stones cut my naked feet."

Alfonso again raised her in his arms; and now that she was able to assist herself, in some degree, she was no longer the dead weight she had been. In a few minutes, he reached the lofty portal of an extensive building.

We have before mentioned the nunnery that was seated on these hills and whose midnight bell had guided Bernardo and Sinan in their escape from Doria's fleet. At this convent,

Alfonso now hastily demanded admittance; and without pausing to answer all the enquiries which the prudent lay-sister made ere she would unbar the doors at that late hour, he set the Duchess on her feet beneath the porch, and flew back to the assistance of Isidora.

The tears of the afflicted Donna Giulia soon moved the compassionate heart of the lay-sister; the doors were unbarred: the noble postulant for shelter was recognised: and every assistance and every tender care were assiduously rendered by the gentle-hearted

that they still arose at a greater distance, between the house and the shore. In fact, while he had been detained, first by his captors and then by Donna Giulia, Bernardo Accorto, with Sinan and their troop, had silently approached the dwelling from the southern side. Thoughts of immediate danger had not seriously existed in the household; and no precautions had been taken which might have rendered their approach more difficult, or have given timely warning to the family. Not until they had entered the outer court and placed a guard at every door, did the doomed inmates discover their insidious foe. Then arose those wild cries of alarm and those shrieks that Barbarossa and the Moors were upon them, which had urged Alfonso to make superhuman exertions to recover his freedom. Profiting by the terror they had inspired, the turbanned Infidels had rushed into the mansion, shouting the name of Barbarossa, than which no war-cry was more dreaded along all the coasts of the Mediter-

raneean. Most of the servants tried to escape in terror—they were overtaken and bound: a few resisted—they were cut down.

Bernardo and Sinan rushed into the saloon—Isidora was there—palsied, as it were, by the dread of all she heard. She was gazing out of the window and calling wildly on Alfonso—whose return she momentarily expected.

“Here she is! Here is one of the two great prizes!” exclaimed Bernardo rushing upon her.

Duchess was closed and bolted. This was but a slight impediment which it took not many minutes to overcome. Those minutes, however, had been enough to secure the escape of Donna Giulia. She had heard the first cries of terror, and well knew their import. She had sprung from the bed on which she had hoped to renovate her charms for the morrow's visit to Naples. She had rushed through the door at the opposite side of the room; and remembering the manner in which Bernardo had, that very day, eluded pursuit—she had fled into the garden and sought the unaccustomed wicket in the wall. Sinan knew not the locality, nor the plan of the premises; and returned baffled to Bernardo in the saloon.

"By Allah, but I fear me she has escaped!" he said.

"Impossible!" said Bernardo. "She must fall into the hands of some of those whom I have stationed at the different entrances."

"Bernardo Accorto," said Isidora with dignity, "what would you with me? Ransom?

name the amount and it shall be paid."

"Not yet—not yet, fair Signorina; though your Signoria may be more willing hereafter to discover the chests of gold. But just now, the Jew, whom I had the honour of introducing to your Signoria last night, has a fancy for you; and he is not one who likes to have his fancies baulked."

"Bernardo, I conjure you," cried Isidora falling on her knees and uplifting her hands in the attitude of supplication, "I conjure you by the soul of Osmanna not to betray me

gone. Come, Sinan; we shall have the country raised upon us by these cries, and the coast-guard will cut off our retreat. Collect thy men; and let us make for the boats. Let each one take his prisoners; and I doubt not that Donna Giulia will be found amongst them. Now, Signorina," he continued; "let my arms have the honour of carrying your fair person."

"Touch me not, as thou valuest thy life!" exclaimed Isidora with dignity. "I warn thee that the least insult offered to me shall be reported to thy master, whether he be Jew or Turk."

Bernardo shrank back abashed. "What would you have?" he said. "I must obey orders, and so must you."

"Will nothing move you—nothing tempt you?" again asked Isidora impressively.

"It is too late: and, by heaven, I hear the cries of the country people rising upon us! I must bear you off; indeed I must."

"Hold off!" cried Isidora. "If it must be,

I will follow. Go on, and I will accompany you."

The corsair was evidently overawed, either by her manner or by her random threat to complain of him to his employer. With some respect, he placed himself on one side of the noble-spirited girl, while Sinan walked at her other hand; and calling to the men to desist from plunder and pursuit, they speedily re-formed their ranks and retreated, at a quick pace, towards the beach.

There was, indeed, good cause to prevent

alert: the cry of 'Barbarossa!' and 'The Moors!' spread from hill to hill; and an irregular army of townsmen, peasantry, and soldiers was climbing, by every avenue, towards the scene of the attack. Alfonso of Procida, notwithstanding the hindrance he had received, was indeed the first to reach the spot: the house was deserted. He ran frantically through the principal rooms, invoking the name of Isidora: two or three wounded followers answered to his appeal. He rushed again into the open air, and adown the road which the corsairs had followed towards the shore.

Nor had the Recluse of Caprea been an unmoved listener to the cries of terror which convulsed the country. He was not struck aghast by the surprise that stunned those who had neglected his constant warning. He apprehended, at once, the danger and the point of attack; and, while most of the people of Amalfi hastened up towards the villa, he strove to persuade some of them

to accompany him along the beach so as to cut off the retreat of the Infidels in case they should escape from the mansion on the mountain. Terror, however, was still too predominant to allow them to hearken to his reasoning. They were willing to run with the crowd, to fight with the crowd; but they feared to follow a new track alone and unsupported. Regretting the time he had lost in a vain attempt to persuade those who usually bowed themselves gladly to his dictation, Consalvo set off, with no other weapon

tones of triumph from the tumultuary country-people : then feared it was only a cheer of exultation sent up on the re-union of two bands thronging, from different sides, towards the same spot. Soon the dreaded cry of "Barbarossa ! Barbarossa !" sent up in the peculiarly wild, shrill tones of his followers, smote no more upon his ear. Were they overcome and slain, or were they silently escaping towards their boats ? The doubt was agonising. But not to solve it, would the stout-hearted enthusiast turn from the track which he had selected as that most likely to lead him where he might be of use. On he plodded, beneath the glorious moon and between those silent waves and the cliffs covered with verdure. The sweat ran down from his furrowed forehead : his nerves contracted themselves into an iron rigidity : yet onwards he strode with increased resolution and with increased speed.

The boats were not in the little creek in which he had expected to find them. They

must, therefore, be in the next; a quarter of a mile further off. Without an instant's hesitation, he continued his toilsome walk over the loose rocks and the wild goat paths. The cries, the cheers again came faintly down to him. Was he too late? Had they already escaped with their victims? Another effort to know the truth! he lifted up his flowing robe and ran. With the speed of younger days, that heavy and venerable man strode and leapt from ledge to ledge, while his grizzled hair dripped with moisture, and the breath came

"Quick! Quick!" urged the voice of Sinan to his men. "Hasten on board: we shall be overtaken yet."

"Tis but the cursed Iettatore!" exclaimed Bernardo seizing a harquebus where he stood in the stern of the boat beside Isidora. "My fate!" he added, levelling the weapon. "I thank Allah who puts him in my power before I leave Italy!"

The boats were being just shoved off. Consalvo was running down to the water's edge. He was not ten paces from Bernardo. With a steady aim, the harquebus was discharged; and the ball struck him full in the centre of his broad chest:—his very tunic was singed: all the crew saw it.

"Shame! shame! it is the prophet, the Marabout!" exclaimed Sinan.

Consalvo staggered an instant. Then rushing on again, planted the shaft of his long cross on the rock, and, using it as a leaping-staff, bounded into the boat in which Isidora lay.

The ball had struck full upon the silver reliquary which he had taken from the corpse of Osmanna and had again placed around his own neck within his vest.

CHAPTER VII.

CHANGE OF SCENE.

Io ti seguo e tu mi fuggi:
Io ti parlo e tu taci:
Io ti miro e tu piangi.
Si m' odii forse? o ingrata!
E che fec' io, perche tu deggi odiarmi?
Anzi che non fec' io
Perche tu deggi amarmi?

GUIDOBALDO DE' BONARELLI,
DETTO L' AGGIUNTO.

“A MIRACLE! A miracle!” exclaimed several of the African corsairs who had marked the fatal direction of the harquebus, and yet saw Consalvo leap unhurt into the boat. “He must be a holy man, a prophet, a marabout.”

"Iettatore!" murmured Bernardo between his teeth, while he turned pale on witnessing what even he deemed a miraculous escape from death. He twisted his fingers into the approved charm and sank, with fear and trembling, upon the bench.

The sailors nearest to the Recluse, however, heeded not this muttered objurgation; but bending lowly down with their hands on their breasts, raised to their lips the hem of his flowing robe;—and exclaimed "Praised be God! Praised be God, he is a holy man whom

A few steady pulls from the disciplined rowers were all that was needed to impel the boats alongside the tall vessel which had so lately crept up into those waters. The prisoners were transferred to her decks, and the joy of the corsairs was only saddened by the sure discovery that Donna Giulia was not amongst the victims. Isidora was conveyed, with much respect, into a cabin: the others were cast indiscriminately into the hold. Consalvo Berretta alone was left in undisturbed freedom. His extraordinary appearance would have alone led the Infidels to respect him as a madman or a religious enthusiast; but when they heard the report of Bernardo's late attempt upon his life, they determined that one who bore a charmed existence must be a holy man, a favourite of heaven. Vainly did Bernardo assert that he was a madman—a powerful Iettatore whose evil eye was able to blast the whole ship's company: as a madman he became no less sacred to the Mussulmen; as a warlock—for Iettatore was a term

which they could not understand—but as a warlock, an enthusiast, a worker of miracles, he was certain of receiving their deepest veneration, their trembling submission even.

While, therefore, the sails were set and the vessel slowly veered round, and, doubling the Cape of Sorrento and the islands, sought the more open sea—Consalvo, who perceived the impression which he had already produced, descended to the cabin to which Isidora had been carried, and majestically waved away with his cross the Dervish or Moorish priest

"You here, holy Consalvo!" cried the poor girl: "oh save me! save me!"

"Calm thyself, Isidora, and listen to me. We are both captives. Respect for the bearer of the cross seems to restrain the accursed Infidels from molesting me; the fame of Consalvo Berretta is widely spread amongst the frequenters of the sea. Thy beauty will preserve thee from all outrage save such as it may draw upon thee. Against these, thine own maiden delicacy will best tell thee how to guard. All I would now desire of thee is to controul these tears, to stifle this natural sorrow. Take upon thee rather a tone of indignation and of command. Do not be submissive, but yet do not offend. Trust in God and in the prayers of his Virgin Mother: our deliverance will take place in His good time."

"Know you ought of Alfonso, padre?" asked the poor prisoner anxiously. "Is he too a captive?"

"He is not. I saw him amid the crowd

who rushed down to the beach after the boats had pushed off. Donna Giulia also must have escaped."

"Thank God, then, there is still hope!" exclaimed Isidora clasping her hands.

"But thou, child; hast thou seen the Jew who before sought thee?" enquired the Recluse.

"No, padre; I do not think he was amongst our captors."

"Thy trials will begin when he appears. Obtain from him that I may be left near thee. May the saints have thee in their keeping. I go now to encourage the delusions of these poor benighted heathens."

He bent over her and kissed her forehead; and then again returned upon deck.

The vessel was steadily pursuing her course. The moon was sinking low on the horizon: the stars were shining out with encreased brilliancy. The sailors were lying about, between sleep and waking; Sinan, who, it seemed, was commander of the galley,

was on the top of the tower sweeping the seas with his night-glass--perhaps in search of some new prize. All this Consalvo marked at a glance; and, willing to encrease the superstitious fear which he perceived that he had already inspired, he cast himself on his knees and went through his religious exercises with more than his usual gesticulations: he smote his breast; he pressed his forehead against the planks on which he knelt; and then, rising on his feet, waved his cross solemnly towards the four quarters of the heavens and loudly implored the blessing of God upon the earth. The sailors had gathered round in wonder: many were awestruck with superstitious terror and respect for the individual: few, if any, scoffed: for even the Mahommedans respect Christ as the greatest of prophets save the founder of their own creed; and although they do not, like the Catholics, revere the cross as the sign of salvation, their hostility to it, like that of the people of Protestant countries, is chiefly

political. Without noticing their remarks in any way, Consalvo laid his head upon a coil of ropes and soon appeared to be buried in a deep sleep.

At day break, loud cries of joy and exultation arose from the crew. Consalvo stood up and saw that they were bearing down upon the compact fleet of Barbarossa which, having relinquished the siege of Pozzuoli, was sailing back triumphantly towards Tunis. The clangour and the clash of barbaric music rent the air; hexagonal banners floated from every mast—the blood-red flag bearing the arm and scimitar of the corsairs; the blue flag of Algiers with the same ominous bearing; the stripes, argent and gules, of the kingdom of Tunis; all intermingled their folds; while from the maintop, streamed out Mahomet's dreaded crescents, declaring that the standards of Barbarossa's own powerful kingdoms were yet supported by the might of the Magnificent Soleyman. In pomp and in triumph, the single vessel rejoined the fleet. Signals were

exchanged between the admiral's galley and the new comer, to ascertain, no doubt, the success of the expedition; and then, with a favouring breeze, the whole squadron proceeded on its voyage towards the coast of Africa.

The barren mountains and the fertile plains of Tunis, the lofty palm trees, the flat terraced houses, soon met the sight of the joyous corsairs. They steered under the frowning batteries of the fort of Goletta, bristled with three hundred cannons of brass which loudly saluted the dreaded sovereign, and soon cast anchor in the tranquil waters of the port.

Then began all that scene of confusion which ever greets the arrival of a ship of war in a friendly port. Then did the corsairs begin to exhibit and to boast of their plunder; then were their captives—collected from all the shores of Italy and considered the most valuable of their acquisitions, either for the ransom which would be paid for them or for their own forced labour—ostentatiously

hurried on shore and conveyed in chains to the bagnio until they should be allotted to different masters. Then was a litter with curtains of cloth of gold brought down to the water's edge for the accommodation of some female captive too beautiful or too much prized for the eyes of the multitude to be permitted to pierce the veils in which she was jealously screened as she was borne from the galley to its sheltering folds. Then came forth from his galley the majestic figure of the conquering and dreaded Barbarossa, habited in all the gorgeous magnificence of the east;—a caftan, or robe of honour, lately received from the Sultaun, upon his shoulders; his scimitar slung around his neck by a baldrick of green velvet worked with gold and studded with precious stones; the hilt of his dagger glittering with diamonds like one vast rock crystal;—his turban looped up with a band of brilliants that glowed like his own transparent seas when spangled by the horizontal rays of the rising moon.

Amid the acclamations of thousands, the dreaded sovereign landed on the territory he had conquered; and, placing his foot in the golden stirrup of an Arab wār-horse of the purest breed and most faultless make, proudly seized the brocaded silken reins that ruled a bit and curb of gold. The charger pranced with delight beneath the well-known weight of its loved rider; and exhibited its shoes of solid gold to the admiration of a multitude who prized and revered power in proportion to the magnificence with which it surrounded itself. Soon was the procession formed; and soon was it winding along the narrow streets of Tunis from whose flat-terraced houses hundreds of females, closely veiled but glittering with the wealth of their lords, looked down with delighted curiosity and marvelled what rare beauty might be concealed within the veils of that magnificent litter. Numerous were the reports that already spread from roof to roof:—a princess captured in Italy:—a new wife for the Sovereign:—a favourite

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CHAPTER VIII.

THE HAREM.

And here at once the glittering saloon
Bursts on his sight, boundless and bright as noon;
Where in the midst reflecting back the rays
In broken rainbows, a fresh fountain plays
High as the enamell'd cupola which towers
All rich with arabesque and golden flowers.

MOORE.

Who shall describe the barbaric splendour of the palace of Barbarossa at Tunis—or rather of that portion of the abode appropriated as the dwelling of the female part of the family, and known as the “heimath,” the “home,” or the “harem” of the east! Through surrounding

handles, and stocks were absolutely covered with diamonds. On another side of the room, and raised so high from the floor that a woman who had not been accustomed to it from childhood would deem it impossible to swing herself into the lofty berth, was the bed-place or balcony of bars of gold which showed, through open trellice work, the gold brocaded mattresses within. In short, as Byron hath it, the whole apartment was

"A dazzling mass of gems, and gold, and glitter,
Magnificently mingled in a litter."

But it was not to study the furniture of this store-house of wealth, that we sought the harem of Barbarossa. Surrounded by a number of beautiful Georgian slaves whom we will not pause to describe, was one whose dress much resembled theirs, although the darker hues of her hair and eyes and the indefinable grace and modesty of her manners and appearance showed, at the first glance, that she was not one of that careless race who considered that their present idleness fulfilled

he whole object of their existence. The female we speak of was still in her first youth, and of a beauty so dazzling that you marked not the glitter of the gems that enumbered it. She was seated upon a pile of embroidered cushions raised to the height of an European sofa: and her full loose dress lay over them and formed a cloud of drapery that a Raphael would have loved to study. A chemisett of the finest linen, through which a sprig of silver thread gracefully meandered, was gathered, in folds, around her throat, and was looped together in front as low, nay lower than her waist, by studs of large single diamonds. These and the chemisett itself were only visible in parts; for over them she wore three jelicques, or small tight jackets, of different colours—lemon, yellow, and crimson—ornamented with the minutest embroidery, formed of pearls and precious stones. The innermost of these was of the palest lemon colour, and was striped with pearls only and drawn together at her waist by one large brooch of the

“ I will not wear it, Theresa,” she had, at last, peremptorily said, “ and I marvel much that thou, who art an Italian and a Christian, canst urge me to adopt unnnecessarily the costume of these infidels. Thinkest thou that I would have decked me out in this horrible guise, that I, a noble Christian maiden, would have condescended to put on trousers and to bare my ankles if I could have procured a decent Christian dress? No ; I only consented to do so because no other attire could be found : I only consented to wear all these jewels because thou and these women think that the tyrant is more likely to respect one who is decked out with a splendour which the barbarians seem to consider to be a badge of rank. But that frightful helmet cannot be wanted for any of these purposes. I have ever worn my hair uncovered in Italy, and I cannot think it needful to hide it now. To do so would be to pay a voluntary tribute to the customs of the infidels. No : give me yonder veil, to cast over my face : and now give me mine own girdle.”

"Surely, Signora, you would not put on that at present?"

"I never part with it," replied the fair girl, pressing it to her lips and then clasping it around her waist.

So soon as the toilet, such as we have described it, was completed, a number of black female slaves entered the apartment; and, bowing lowly to our heroine—whom we trust that the reader's sympathy has already discovered, notwithstanding her present disguise—commenced dancing and singing to the sound of the tambourines, of the small earthenware drums and of the very imperfect lutes which they bore. The music was pleasing, although most monotonous; and had she felt less anxiety about her own fate, Isidora could have been heartily amused by the strange contortions into which the dancers threw their bodies for her especial entertainment. Of figure and even steps, the dance had none; the only aim of the black artists seemed to be to wriggle themselves into the most unnatural

attitudes with the least possible locomotion. They reminded Isidora of the long drawn out pirouettes which she had, once or twice, seen artists exhibit at the theatre at Bologna:—although there was nothing in the attitudes of the Moorish slaves which could raise a blush on the cheek of modesty.*

The novelty of the performance had long worn off, and Isidora's heart had again sunk within her as her thoughts again began to dwell upon her hopeless captivity and all the dangers that attended it, when a stir

captive with more of the manner and of the winning gallantry of a Christian knight than accorded with her previous notions of the renowned infidel. In his person, Barbarossa was well-made, tall, and robust: his features were commanding, intelligent and handsome; a neatly trimmed coal-black beard set them off to the best advantage: his dress was rich, although not so gorgeous as that in which he had made his recent triumphant entry into the city. Isidora strove to rise as he stepped into the room, but her knees shook under her; and without daring to raise her eyes to his face, she sank again upon the pile of cushions on which she had been sitting.

“Do not exert thyself, beautiful Isidora,” said the Sovereign, addressing her in the *lingua franca*, while he courteously assisted her to regain her seat, and then placed himself in Oriental fashion on a lower cushion near her. “In a short time, we shall hope to see thee spring more joyously to our approach. Thou wilt soon banish these pretty fears, and

learn that the heart of Barbarossa is not so terrible as his name."

Isidora's fears, or at least the expression of them, disappeared on the instant. This speech recalled her to herself, by shewing her the necessity of high resolve if she would worthily assert her own character and compel her jailor to address her in more respectful tones.

"I had hoped," she said, "to find that the dreaded prince of Africa united the gallant and courteous and respectful bearing of a Christ-

"Respect for a woman? by Allah, but that is a strange notion!" exclaimed Barbarossa with a forced attempt to recover his self-possession. "We have heard that the knights of Europe treat their women as though they were gods. Is this what thou wouldst inculcate?"

"A true knight never insults a female, particularly one whom the chances of war have placed in his power."

"And deemest thou that I have insulted thee, my pretty child?" he answered, offering to take her hand, which Isidora proudly drew back.

"I do. Your Highness speaks, perhaps, to me as may be the custom of these places; but not as a noble Christian maiden ought to be addressed while she is only detained in your power until her ransom can be procured."

"Ransom!" exclaimed Barbarossa. "And dost thou really deem that we have taken some trouble to possess thee solely for the sake of thy ransom? Think better of our

knightly feelings: beauty, such as thine, is beyond all price. Look up, look up, and think not that Mussulmen are more mercenary than Jews."

This speech, although sufficiently alarming, did not convey to Isidora the additional shock of surprise. She had spoken, indeed, of ransom, but she had too painfully and too fully reflected on all the circumstances that had attended her capture to entertain any real hope that it had been prompted by such motives. Her chief object had been to gain

meet their glance—the fiery eyes of the Jew : of the forward presumptuous Jew whose manner had so offended her delicacy at Amalfi ! She grew deadly pale and trembled like an aspen leaf.

“ Why the Jew seems to alarm thee even more than Barbarossa,” said the Corsair King smiling. “ But fear not, fear not ; thou wouldst not buy his wares, but the Jew would not have dealt hardly by thee, nor will the sovereign. But take some coffee ; it will refreshen thee : thou art faint.”

He gently clapped his hands, and the Georgian slaves approached from the further side of the room ; and, soon afterwards, handed to him and to Isidora sweetmeats and coffee in most diminutive and beautiful china cups inserted in golden filigree saucers.

“ Yes, lovely Isidora,” continued Barbarossa as he sipped the boiling coffee : “ ’twas to see thee and thy friend that I assumed a disguise which might have been derogatory to any one else. Thy friend was destined for the mighty

Sultaun, who loves her passionately from the many descriptions he has heard of her:—but not more than I have loved thee since first mine eyes drank in thy many perfections. Thou wouldst not then place the African salma on thy head, nor wilt thou now, I perceive: but I blame thee not. That hair is too beautiful to be concealed beneath gold and jewels. But methinks the rest of our country's attire becomes thee well. What sayest thou? We, ourselves, can conceive nothing more exquisite than thy dress, unless it be thy lovely

away, and I will pray to the blessed Virgin to open your eyes and to have mercy on you."

The prince was moved by her sorrow. "I have come to thee too soon," he said. "Grief for thy friends and country still blinds thee. In a few weeks, thou wilt be reconciled to the change, and wilt better know that which is for thy good. My love is not to be despised. But, tell me," he quickly added; "perhaps thou lovest already? In thy country, women have a strange freedom permitted to them."

"I do love, Prince; and hope not to move me from my love," answered the poor girl passionately. "Oh send me away, send me away, and take back all these hateful gems."

"And whom dost thou love? Is he one of thy boasted Christian knights? And wouldst thou compare him," continued the prince scornfully in answer to Isidora's unspoken sign of assent—"wouldst thou compare him—an iron-clad soldier, the owner of a horse and a lance, and, it may be, of a few miserable villages—wouldst thou compare the love of

such an one to that which Barbarossa offers to thee? Think, silly child, think what it is to reign in a heart that has conquered fate—that has founded kingdoms—that has made its owner to be dreaded from the Straits of Gibilterra to the golden horn of Stamboul:—whose galleys sweep the seas:—whose name alone terrifies the children of thy boasted Christian knights when the rod of their tutors is unable to rule them,—whose fame haunts the dreams of their sires as they slumber, in their turretted castles, on the crests of the inner moun-

this; we would not, as yet, force an unwilling love; but thou must, indeed, be blind if thou dost not bless the prophet for the mercies he has vouchsafed to thee."

"Oh be generous, noble king," exclaimed Isidora; "be generous as you are mighty. I never can think of your proposals with aught but horror. Others are as fair as me;—they will feel grateful for that which it drives me wild to think of; they will love you as you would wish to be loved. Oh be satisfied with the maidens of your own faith; and send me away, send me away to my own country!"

"Not to be thought of, pretty one! not to be thought of! But do thou reflect on all I have said to thee."

"Then heaven have mercy upon me," cried the poor girl starting from her seat and casting herself on her knees beside a neighbouring couch: "Heaven have mercy on me, for I am without other hope. Oh leave me not, I beseech thee, my God, leave me not in the

hands of this cruel man. Look upon me in my distress, and look upon him who oppresses me. He is thy enemy—the enemy of thy holy faith: oh let him not triumph over thy servant, but do thou uphold me and deliver me.”

Barbarossa stood, restrained with admiration while his beautiful captive uplifted to heaven that earnest and faultless face, down which the big transparent tears silently rolled. He watched her with a delighted curiosity—heeding not the words which she uttered aloud,

way being thrust rudely aside, the Recluse of Caprea, with his usual dress and accompaniments, his cross, his dagger and his lofty cap—majestically strode into the room. Barbarossa sternly turned him towards the entrance, when the two black slaves, who had announced his own arrival, hastily came forward and, prostrating their foreheads to the floor, exclaimed, “It is the mad prophet—the great Nazarene marabout. We could not stay him, your Highness.”

“Oh, this is he? We have heard of him,” answered the corsair king following, with his eyes, Consalvo, who had gone on to the couch at which Isidora was praying and had there placed himself on his knees beside her.

“Listen, O Lord, to her prayers,” he said in a loud voice; “listen to her prayers whatever they may be. It is I whom thou hast endowed with knowledge; it is I whose life thou didst so miraculously preserve when the bullet of the harquebus rent my very tunic—

it is I who join my prayers with hers, and who intercede for her."

"And so," said Barbarossa sarcastically as the Recluse rose from his knees, "And so that hole in thy vest was scorched by the flame from a loaded harquebus?"

"Thy follower, Sinan, and his infidel crew saw it, O corsair, and revered the Bearer of the Cross," solemnly answered Consalvo.

"We have heard of the marvel: follow thou me," continued the king as he turned him to leave the room. "Damsel," he added,

wilt earn the indulgence. A person of thy sanctity must have influence over that girl. Thou shalt have free access to her: here is a ring of price for thee: move her to our wishes: thy freedom shall reward thy success."

Consalvo paused a moment in silence: then waved his cross widely in the air; took the ring: placed it upon his own finger: and answered slowly—

"Thou art too hasty, O Corsair King. Christian maidens of high birth need to be long and respectfully wooed. The sensual address, with which thou wouldst approach Georgian slaves, suits not their refined delicacy. Thou must win their minds ere thou canst possess their hearts."

"Thine be the task: I have bought thee," answered Barbarossa. "We will be patient: there may, in truth, be pleasure in wooing such an one in the style thou speakest of. But do thou thy part: for a while, thou shalt go and come everywhere without hin-

drance : after that, freedom or the bow-string."

So speaking, the tyrant turned away, and soon disappeared under the arcades of the marble courts of his palace.

CHAPTER IX.

THE TAMED HEATHEN.

How gladly doth the crowd confess
Its despicable littleness !
How gladly bow it meekly down
The master-spirit's thrall to own !—
To follow whosoe'er will lead,
Nor question of the right—nor heed !
And how the master spirit prizes
This glorious power to guide and away
The very fools whom it despises—
The fools who bow them and obey !

The praise of those we scorn—deride—
Is frankincense to human pride.
Aye, but in praising us, you know,
They show some little sense :—Exactly so.

THE FORGOTTEN RECORD.

For a few minutes after Barbarossa had left him, Consalvo Berretta stood on the same spot, absorbed in deep meditation ; then suddenly retracing his steps, he again sought

out the room he had just left. The two slaves would have opposed his progress, but he exhibited the ring he had received from the Pacha, and passed beneath the hangings that screened the door. The Georgian and Moorish slaves were assiduously endeavouring to console the grief of Isidora : he waved them majestically aside—further—further, to the extreme side of the room ; and then returning, seated himself on the couch beside the captive and kindly took her hand in his own. For a while, each looked wistfully in the face of the

pray to the Lord that he may forgive me, if I have done wrong; but I have allowed the tyrant to think that I will persuade thee to receive his addresses."

"Padre Consalvo!"

"By that means, and by adopting an increased wildness of manner, which I fear me is but too habitual to me, I have gained free access to thee from the Pacha, and reverence from his barbarous subjects. Thou must do thy part."

"And with what hope, padre Consalvo? How or when shall we ever be released?"

"God only knows," said the Recluse sadly. "I fear me there is little chance that any ransom would be accepted for thee, so long, at least, as the Corsair's passion for thee endures. Thou seemest to be absorbed into his establishment; and our only hope is that his fancy may alight upon some new object; but that, alas, thy fatal beauty will long forbid. There was some talk that the Emperor was about to send an expedition against this stronghold of

robbers : but if it is even contemplated, it may not be undertaken for months ; and its success will be, even then, doubtful !”

“Santa Maria, help me, oh help me !” sighed Isidora wringing her hands. “Have you seen ought of that wretch, Bernardo, whom I believe to be the origin of all our misfortunes ?” she asked.

“I have not seen him : but I understand that he is now avowedly a renegado to the religion of Christ, and is in high favour with the Pacha. He is appointed keeper over the

her to the frivolous companionship of the other slaves and attendants of the harem.]

And so the days and even the weeks passed on. Barbarossa often sought her and seemed to derive encreased pleasure from every interview. Isidora, now familiarised with the contemplation of her sad fate, had nerved her mind to act up to that which was needful. Her manner towards her persecutor was no longer humble, tearful and suppliant as it had been ; she was now dignified and reserved ; as self-possessed and as courteous as she would have endeavoured to show herself towards a princely Christian suitor. It was strange, but the Pacha himself seemed to enter into the spirit of such a suit. When Consalvo had suggested to him the Christian mode of wooing a high-born damsel, his fancy had been struck by the idea. He now no longer pressed upon his captive the lordly declaration of his admiration ; but began to feel an interest in noting the workings of her mind, in studying the expressions of her re-

accuse to exercise over the
wooded.

"Let others deem thee
with the power of the evil
day, after a lengthened in-
captive: "thou knowest his
madness to account; and in
this matter, evil shall be the
upon thee. Take this for thy

And again he forced into the
of the venerable man, a revelation
at the very thought of what
sickened.

The Recluse was turning
away—anxious and despairing
tated on the growing passion
when he met the aged dervish

Isidora's capture. He had often met this person since he had been in Tunis; and believed him to be attached to a mosque which rose, with oriental splendour, in the neighbourhood of the Seraglio: the Mahommedan had often seemed anxious to improve the acquaintance between them: and now again came up to him in friendly guise.

"What is it," he said, "that overshadows the mind of my brother? How can one so powerful—so much revered, permit the cloud of disappointment to darken the sunshine of his day?"

"Is it not enough to make one sad, oh Marabout, to be a captive to the infidel? and to see her whom I would have saved exposed to dangers that are accursed of God?"

"Yet art thou venerated by the people," answered the Turk. "Nazarenes and true believers alike honour and fear thy skill. Wouldest thou impart a share of thy knowledge and of thy power to thy brother, he

“Nay, I myself saw the b
at thee from the boat. He w
rescue his own life from st
surely save himself and he
watches, from the thrall of
beard of the Prophet, but t
rejoice were the daughter
removed from its walls!”

“What meanest thou, ol
the Recluse.

“I mean that rumour tells
ness is so engrossed with the
ian slave who was captured
the other women find no lon
eyes. Mine own daughter
and before the arrival of t

the Christian will embrace the true faith. Already she bears on her girdle the revered name of Allah and the Prophet. She will be the favoured wife of his Highness."

"Wouldst thou prevent this?" exclaimed Consalvo eagerly. "Here is a jewel for thee which I have just received from the hands of Barbarossa. It is thine: I have others, with gold:—come and receive them: they are also thine."

"How darest thou, Nazarene, tamper with the faith of a dervish!" cried the Turk with a great shew of indignation, although Consalvo observed that he did not offer to return the jewel.

"I offer not to tamper with thy faith;" answered the Recluse. "I merely offer thee gold and gems. Does thine accursed law forbid thee from coming with me to receive them?"

"And the knowledge which makes thee to be so revered—wilt thou impart it to thy brother?" asked the African following Consalvo

as he turned away. "It is pleasant to sway the stupid vulgar."

"Pshaw! thou wilt have gold—thou wilt be learned!" answered the Recluse, striding back to the quarters in which he had taken up his abode; and followed, at a distance, by his ambitious acquaintance.

As he passed near the quays on which thousands of slaves, of every age and nation, were employed at forced labour, until they should be ransomed by their friends or by those religious confraternities which had been

tion of the Recluse: in another moment, he recognised Bernardo Accorto. The renegade had perceived the holy passer-by from the first; and had felt towards him those amiable impulses which his features had so truly betrayed. Since the accident of the harquebus, he had been more than ever convinced of the supernatural power of his intended victim; and had shunned every chance of encounter with him. The long full sleeves of his Turkish dress concealed the contortions which he now made with his hands in order to avert whatever evil might result to himself from the present hapless glance of his dreaded eye.

Were those contortions to prove an effective spell? Time will show. Meanwhile, Consalvo passed on without further noticing the despised renegade. The Marabout followed him at a distance. They entered a court together. Nothing further was said between them which might expose either to the treachery of the other. The presents of Barbarossa

were made over to the hands of the Mahomedan priest ; and, for the first time since his captivity, the Recluse of Caprea was cheered by a faint glimmer of hope ; although he well perceived that faint—most faint, was the light that emitted it.

CHAPTER X.

TO THE RESCUE.

Loin ces rimeurs craintifs dont l'esprit phlegmatique
Garde dans ses fureurs un ordre didactique :
Qui chantent d'un Heros les progrès éclatans ;
Maigres historiens, suivrons l'ordre des temps.
Ils n'osent un moment perdre un sujet de vue.
Pour prendre Dole, il faut que Lille soit rendue ;
Et que leur vers exact, ainsi que Mezeray,
Ait fait déjà tomber les ramparts de Courtray.

BOILEAU.

THOSE rumours which had long circulated in Europe, and which had even reached the slaves confined in Tunis, foretelling the organisation of an expedition against the pira-

tical states of Barbary — were now on the point of being realised. We have, elsewhere, recounted the manner of the rise and triumphant progress of Barbarossa; we have mentioned his recent conquest of Tunis; and that the expelled native sovereign, the effeminate Muley-Hascen, had appealed to the Emperor Charles for assistance against the treacherous usurper of his dominions. Many motives had induced Charles to listen to his prayer: still more had urged him to check the power of the corsairs who ravaged the coasts of his Spanish and Italian dominions, and threatened even the permanent conquest of Naples and Sicily. The complaints of his subjects were daily brought to him in tones which he could not disregard: the chivalry and the faith of Europe called upon him, the most powerful of Christian Sovereigns, to oppose a barrier to the encroaching strides of the Mahomedans. Glory could thus be most speedily achieved: thus would his regard for the outcries of the more humble of his sub-

jects be evinced ; thus would he contrast his magnanimity with the selfishness of other temporal princes who desolated Christendom by their wars upon one another, while he, the greatest of them all, should assume the cross for a holy war against the most bitter enemies of Christ and of them all.

Yet notwithstanding all these great and good reasons in favour of the expedition, it is doubtful whether it would have been so speedily resolved on had not the recent attempt of the corsairs to secure the person of the far-famed Donna Giulia of Gonzaga awakened a feeling of indignation, in the minds of the nobles, which the sufferings of the poorer inhabitants of the coast had been slow to inspire. So much do small circumstances influence the fate of nations ! The appearance of the beautiful Duchess at the coronation at Bologna, where the great ones from every part of the world had been assembled, had spread more widely the praise of her charms ; and proportioned to their fame was

the thirst for revenge upon the presumptuous pirates which glowed in every knightly breast. She herself was unwearied in her endeavours to excite her powerful kinsmen to urge on the expedition; for she could not but reproach her own petulance and wilfulness as the cause of the misfortune which had happened to her friend. The Count of Procida could do but little; but wherever a brave heart could be incited to beat in unison with his own, there he spoke and there he fanned the growing flame.

At length, the expedition was decided upon; and all Christendom was invited to support it and to add to its efficiency. Cheerfully was the appeal responded to throughout the dominions of the Emperor; and, most particularly, in the kingdom of Naples, which had so cruelly suffered from the incursions of Barbarossa. The new Viceroy of Toledo built a galley at his own private cost by way of setting an example to others. The Prince of Salerno and many of the Italian nobility did

the same: and when it was announced that the Emperor himself intended to accompany the expedition, scarcely was there a baron or a knight who would have dared to remain inglorious at home.

A powerful fleet was by these means soon collected under the banner of the Marquis del Vasto. The religious order of knighthood to which the Emperor had granted the island of Malta in lieu of their former settlement at Rhodes which had fallen under the power of the infidel—furnished a squadron which was small, indeed, but which the valour of these sworn champions of Christianity rendered an important addition. All these, with such vessels as could be collected in Sicily, were assembled in the bay of Naples and thronged with the veteran Spanish and German troops who had distinguished themselves on every field that had been fought in Italy for years. The Pope himself sent a fleet of twenty-two gallies to support the cause of Christ against the impostor of Mecca, and

proclaimed this a holy war deserving the support of every son of the church.

With favouring winds, the gallant *del Vasto* set sail from the shores of Naples, and steered towards the small town of *Civita Vecchia*, where his Holiness himself awaited to see the fleet pass on to its glorious destination. On the summit of a lofty tower upon an advanced head-land, he stood; and, with tears in his eyes, prayed for the success of the expedition and for the exaltation of the cross. He joined in the hymns and the prayers which were put up from a numerous priesthood; and then, taking the consecrated Host in his trembling hands, he solemnly imprecated the blessings of heaven upon the fleet that rode beneath the battlements. He signed the sign of the cross on the air, over the waters, and over the vessels; and bid them go forth to conquer as the gallant crusaders of old had arrested the first onsets of the Infidels.

Having thus testified to the world the interest which he felt in the success of the

expedition, the Pope descended to the church and delivered into the keeping and honourable custody of the commander of his galleys, Virginio Orsino and our old acquaintance, the hunchback Giustiniano, the banners and sceptre of the church;—solemnly charging them to exalt the cause of Christ and to triumph over his enemies. With equal earnestness, he committed to the hands of del Vasto, that he might bear them to Doria, the commander of the imperial fleet, the consecrated poinard, with its hilt set with jewels and its rarely engraved scabbard, and the velvet cap, embroidered with pearls, which were the customary donations made by Popes to generals engaged in holy wars against the Infidels.

Then, with the blessing and the prayers of the head of the church, the expedition finally set sail from the coast of Italy.

Need we say that Alfonso of Procida was on board that fleet, on a galley which he had built at his own cost, and at the head of such

a body of stout troopers as he had been able to secure by sacrificing the whole income which he would have received from his recovered lands at Amalfi during the next ten years?

Prosperous winds carried our crusaders, for such they considered themselves, to the port of Cagliari, in Sardinia, where they joined the main body of the Emperor's fleet:—or rather the united fleets of the different countries which owned his wide dominion.—There was, for example, the Flemish fleet laden with the infantry of the Low Countries; there was the Spanish fleet, on which he himself had embarked with the flower of the nobility of the Peninsula; there was a large squadron from Portugal under the command of his brother; there were the gallies of Andrew Doria—the finest specimens of naval architecture and of naval equipment then known in Europe. To him, did Charles entrust the command of the whole armament, whose numbers we will not particularly vouch for;

merely intimating that some historians state them to have amounted to three, and some to five, hundred sail. In these degenerate days, an admiral would deem it of some consequence to ascertain whether he had a couple of hundred vessels, more or less, under his flag : in the days of which we write, the minds of men disregarded such minutiae :—or, perhaps, the vessels were smaller than are our frigates !

But amid all the new and more refined pleasures which he had found in the harem, Barbarossa neglected not the defence of the kingdoms over which he ruled. He had received sure advice of the mighty preparations made by the Emperor, and could not be ignorant of their object. The master-spirit deserted him not for an hour, but nobly answered the calls which he made upon it. His preparations for resistance were speedily planned on a scale commensurate with those which had collected the armament against him. He recalled all his corsairs from their different piratical expeditions ; he collected

around Tunis all the troops which could be spared from his other dominions: he sent messengers into the interior, urging the independent native princes, whether Arabs or Moors, and, above all, the still warlike tribe of the Kabyles, to rise in defence of their common country, and never to permit an effeminate sovereign, who, by allying himself with Christians, had proved himself an apostate from the faith of the prophet, to obtain dominion in Africa. By such representations he excited the patriotism and the fanaticism of the natives; and induced them to rise universally in his defence. An army of fifty thousand men, including twenty thousand cavalry, was speedily placed under his command; and by a munificent distribution of his immense treasures, he induced the native princes to fan the ardour of their followers and to awaken in them such a degree of enthusiasm as should lead them to pant, like their native war-horses, for the hour of battle and of victory.

Barbarossa himself, however, was too wary

to rely implicitly upon these light and undisciplined troops. His greatest attention was directed towards the reinforcement of the walls of the town; and, more than all, did he exert the whole skill of his engineers in strengthening the fortress of Goletta—a strong castle that defended the narrow entrance to the bay or harbour, at the bottom of which the town was seated. Art did all that was possible to render this fort impregnable; and he then entrusted the defence of it to the renegade Jew, Sinan, whose valour and successes had gradually secured him the perfect confidence and esteem of his sovereign. With six thousand of the Sultan's best disciplined Turkish troops, our old acquaintance threw himself into the castle; and Barbarossa entertained no fears that this important outpost would be lightly won.

But all these cares and military preparations engrossed many of those hours which he had lately spent delighted at the feet of Isidora. And it was fortunate for the captive that such

was the case; for informed as she was by the Recluse, of all that was going on in the outer world, she could not have well concealed from him the nervous anxiety which now rendered every hour an hour of misery. Upon the success of the Christians, she well knew that her future fate depended: nay, the most complete success must crown their efforts ere she could hope to be wrested from the very harem of the Corsair. Not lightly, she well knew, would he resign her whom he now truly loved with a fervour that excited her commiseration.

“Oh if thou wouldst but overcome these prejudices of thy education,” he said to her one day in a solemn and impassioned tone; “if thou wouldest but open the eyes of thy mind, which I now believe to be as beautiful as those which have burnt my heart as dry as the sands of the Sahara—if thou wouldst but embrace the pure doctrine of the Koran—how gladly would I wed thee in the face of the world! I swear to thee, that thou alone

shouldst reign over my heart ; for thee I would renounce the privileges of my state, which I now despise : thou shouldst rule in my harem without a rival as thou art without an equal."

"Oh never—never, Prince"—began Isidora surprised by this unlooked for declaration.

"We will discourse further when these proud invaders shall have been scattered like the scum of the sea before the steady southwest wind," answered the Pacha rising with dignity. "Thy favoured Christian knight will, doubtless, be among the throng. May Allah, only grant that my sword may cross his in the battle! Thou wilt then be free, and thy heart will then no longer yearn for one unworthy to possess such loveliness. Barbarossa will not long brook a rival."

He had scarcely returned to the divan and seated himself, with his feet resting upon the overgrown lion cub that usually served him as a footstool, when the guardian of the slaves, Ibraim Aga, craved an audience. In the pride and the shame of a successful renegade,

Bernardo Accorto entered and seating himself on a low cushion, at a distance from the Pacha, obtained permission to speak.

"I fear me," he then said, "that all the wise measures of your Highness for discomfiting this expedition will prove abortive unless some order be taken with the slaves who are under the charge of your servant."

"They are under thy charge. Take thou order with them."

"There are ten thousand of them, your Highness. It would require an army to restrain them, were they at large in the Marina as they now are, while their friends were doing battle for them without the walls."

"There is reason in what thou sayest. What wouldst thou recommend?"

"That they should be closely ironed and transferred to the citadel above the town for greater security."

"Let it be done," answered Barbarossa with the instant determination of a powerful mind. "Begone : why lingerest thou ?"

"There is another slave"—continued Bernardo with trembling hesitation—"one who was brought off from Naples—in the harem of your Highness"—

"Renegade, beware!" interposed Barbarossa turning pale with anger, and frowning with such a frown that the lion cub noted it, and growled fiercely at Bernardo.

"I spoke not of her," interposed the traitor quickly; "your slave spoke not of the lady Isidora, but of the old madman, the Iettatore. Is it prudent to leave him at large during such a perilous time? Had I not better cause him, also, to be ironed? I would have done so but for the favour your highness lavishes upon him."

"Begone, slave!" exclaimed Barbarossa still angrily. "Defile not, with thy treacherous breath, the name of her whom thy master honours; and lay not a finger upon the Christian Marabout at thy peril. Begone!"

Bernardo felt that his design upon Isidora had been discomfited, and that the shallow

artifice, by which he had hoped to make the words appear to have been intended for Con-salvo, was quite seen through. He shrank abashed from the presence. What his views might have been in respect to Isidora, we are unable to say : perhaps he wished, in the event of Barbarossa's defeat, to fly with her into the interior of the country, and there to hold her for ransom. If such was his design, it was for the present frustrated by the anger of the Prince ; whose commands he could now only fulfil in regard to the unhappy slaves under his own charge. Ten thousand of them were removed to the citadel, and there held in irons.

Without impediment from the Infidels, the Emperor, meanwhile, landed his army, of thirty thousand fighting men, at Porto Farina, on the coast of Africa. With shouts of triumph and with hymns of thanksgiving, the Christian squadrons took possession of the land of the Moslem. Banner after banner was unfurled, and troop after troop hastened from the gallies and took up their position on

the arid sands. All were equipped with the utmost splendour; for the Emperor himself was there to mark their loyalty and their magnificence: and all were animated by a feeling of religious enthusiasm and of knightly pride such as had never been inspired since the days of the old crusaders. In the breasts of thousands of the Spaniards and Italians, enmity and personal revenge also increased the ardour which already fiercely glowed. Which of them had not suffered loss from the incursions of the long-dreaded Barbarians? Which of them had not seen his house in flames, his property destroyed, his wife, his children, or his kinsmen, borne off into slavery? Or if he had not suffered in his own family, which of them was not allied to some neighbour who had been compelled to remain at home, but who had deputed him to avenge his wrongs, to rescue those who were dear to him? How many of them, like the Count of Procida, felt that they were engaged in a personal quarrel?—that some dear object of their affections,

enslaved beyond those burning sands, looked forward to their arrival; held forth their fettered hands towards them; and, with sighs and tears, besought heaven to protect and support their deliverers? Never was enthusiasm more general; never was martial ardour more excusable, more sanctified.

The Emperor stood upon a rising mound, beneath a spreading palm-tree in the sight of the whole army. Around him was the flower of the chivalry of Europe—for it was not to be supposed that the knights of France and England would remain at home when such an opportunity was offered of winning immortal renown: there are tomb-stones yet extant in England which record that they who lie beneath fought for the cross in this war against the Infidel. Charles surveyed the splendid array, and commanded that the soul-stirring music which filled the air should cease; and then called towards him a knight whose splendid embossed armour we have before seen and which admirably set off his

young and graceful figure: so noble his expression—so gallant his bearing—that a poet of the times says that he was made to be the study of a painter:—


“Voi seite appunto fatto a pennello
Giovane e ben disposto e valoroso,
Altiero in vista e di persona bello.”

“Don Alfonso, Marquis del Vasto,” said the Emperor, “receive from our hand the baton of Constable over the army.”

“Your Majesty overwhelms me by pressing upon me such a charge in the face of the chivalry of the world. None but yourself is worthy to lead such an array.”

“We have decided, Marquis,” continued Charles. “We commit the command of this expedition to you. Let the heralds make proclamation that we have appointed the Lord del Vasto Constable over the army; and that we command all to obey his orders as though they were our own.”

The Count of Procida looked on the gallant bearing of the possessor of his paternal



and the plan of the campaign
before determined upon, or
issued that the army should
the coast to invest the fortress

CHAPTER XI.

THE GOLETTA.

Or l' Africa v' aspetta a lidi suoi
La dove quella gente berretina
E Barbarossa già treman di voi
Giusto desio vi mena alla rovina
Di quelli che poco anzi ebbero ardire
Di far qui presso a noi tanta rapina.
E su ne i monti fer scalza fuggire
La saggia e bella Donna di Gonzaga,
La cui gran fama gli fè quà venire.
Perocche Troja non fu mai sì vaga
D'Helena quanto l' Asia di costei,
La qual d' altra bellezza non s'appaga.
E Soliman al gran nome di lei,
Che la fama ha portato in ogni parte,
N' ha sospirato quattro volte e sei.

CAPITOLO DEL MAURO AL MARCHESE DEL GUASTO.

To JUSTIFY many of our preceding statements, we give this long extract from an ode addressed to the Marquis del Guasto,

or Vasto, by a contemporary Neapolitan poet.

And so the army advanced through those once-fertile plains, and over the ruins of ancient Carthage, and beside the wide salt lakes that are so plentiful in Algeria. The fleet followed, along the shore, the line of the march, and supplied the army with all that was needful, nay, with all that was luxurious.

"Great is the power of Europeans!" exclaimed the exiled Muley Hassan to the Emperor; as he thought on the irregular

against its works, and began to sputter forth its almost-ineffectual missives. These were replied to by the thunder of the three hundred brazen cannons on the besieged fortress; and never had the plains and the wilds of Africa been startled by thunders such as were then heard. The jackals fled howling from the neighbouring hills; the lions and the hyenas were scared from their accustomed retreats; and, herding together on their flight, halted not until they had escaped from the anger of man into the wilds of the dread Sahara.

Meanwhile Consalvo, whose favour with Barbarossa seemed to increase in proportion to the Pacha's anxiety to obtain the love of Isidora, often sought the citadel on the height, that he might, thence, look over the harbour, and obtain, if possible, some insight into the progress of the siege. His heart bled within him at the sight of the poor christian prisoners there confined, who were only occasionally allowed to enjoy the light and the air of heaven in the courts of the

times, availed himself to so
with spiritual consolations,
amid the despair which he
by their recent removal to
were the remembered faces
around him to ask for his
these occasional visits: many
the bay of Naples—many
its shores and of its beautiful
bowed their familiar faces up
wept tears of delight to see
they had long learned to re-
native country. Such meetings
length so painful to the R
inability really to relieve th
he had avoided the citadel
prior to that on which the

many of the principal captives were at the time confined, he saw their keeper, Bernardo, in earnest conversation with several of the unfortunates who were grouped around him. The eye of the renegade fell at once upon the figure of the Recluse and quailed beneath his glance. He hastily addressed some words to his prisoners and left the hall by an opposite door.

Consalvo went on amid the ranks that crowded round him.

"Joy! joy!" said several in a whisper as he passed.

"Good news," said others in a somewhat louder voice.

"Hope! hope!" said one fainting wretch whose pale face and toil-worn limbs shewed that the days of deliverance, however soon they might dawn, would never restore him to his distant and sighed-for home.

"What is it, my children?" asked Consalvo kindly. "You may speak without fear. As I entered, I saw that your keepers were

hastening with their luncheons to the battlements to guess at the cause of the increased cannonading which we hear."

"The good Signor Accorto—"

"The gallant Ibraim Aga—"

"Our good keeper—"

"Hush! hush!" said the Recluse checking the outburst. "Do not speak so loud, or you will recal the jailors. What is it that the rascally renegade has done to call for such gratitude? Speak thou, Signor cavaliere," he said, addressing a knight whom the pirates had seized from the shores of Ischia.

"Not having seen your reverence of late," began the captive, "we knew not how to act; but we had heard from the jailors that the christian army—may the saints fight with them!—were making some progress at the Goletta: so that we all thought there was some hope for us. Now it chanced that when the renegade, Bernardo Accorto, looked in at us yesterday, I recognised him at once; I

had known him as a follower to the Count of Procida, and I thought such a fellow as he would be likely to do anything for profit, as he had doubtless denied his faith for the same reason. So I went to him and claimed acquaintance. He did not seem to like to remember me at first; and so I began, at once, upon business to quicken his recollections. "Signor Bernardo," said I aside to him; "when the Christians have taken Tunis, your trade will be ruined. If you give us a helping hand I think we can make up a pretty purse now, and engage to provide for you in Italy and to make your peace with the church."

"'Pshaw!' he answered; 'how should poor devils, like ye, make up a purse? I will have ye stripped and searched again.'

"And you will find nothing if you do," said I. "But I think we could collect a good many rings and crosses and little trinkets of value if you would take them and engage to give us a helping hand. Amongst ten or twelve thousand prisoners, you may be sure some

things have escaped your eyes which we would die rather than give up! Well, he considered awhile, and then told me to see what could be got together by to-day."

"And he has taken the bribe?" asked Consalvo.

"I gave him a golden reliquary," said one.

"And I a diamond cross," exclaimed another.

"And I a golden ducat."

"But he swore, padre Consalvo," expostulated one, unwilling to relinquish his newly-conceived hope.

"Dost thou doubt the words of Consalvo Berretta—of the Bearer of the Cross?" asked the Recluse sternly. "He will betray ye, I repeat; go to; go to; be prepared for the worst."

So saying, he strode away from the terrified and disheartened group, whom he felt a certain degree of satisfaction in punishing thus for having entered into an alliance with one whom he now certainly hated with an intensity that would have urged him to exercise whatever malign influence he could have brought to bear upon him—whether by means of the evil eye or by any other power.

Nor were the feelings of Bernardo Accorto towards the Recluse more friendly. He had slunk back to his own cell when his interview with the captives had been interrupted; and he there sat buried in vengeful medita-

tion. "No;" said he to himself: "the matter must not now be proceeded with. There was no danger in taking the secret treasures of the poor devils: it was my duty to possess myself of them. I can pay them over to Barbarossa at any time. But the other plan can never succeed now his eye has looked upon me. No: he never yet crossed my path without bringing me misfortune. It was owing to meeting him that I killed Osmanna; that I missed capturing Donna Giulia; and then the harquebus—I shudder to think of it! And yet I have ever worn the most approved counter-charm! However, we must not now think of this proposal of the slaves. Here, amid the Infidels, my lot is cast; and if Barbarossa is beaten, which I do not think he will be, I must carry off the girl to the interior and there treat with the valiant Count of Procida for her ransom. I marvel where they could have hid the chests of gold!—"

Let us leave him to the enjoyment of such

thoughts, and return to the fortress of Goletta and our old acquaintance, Sinan. The seige had now continued three weeks; and bravely had the assailants advanced their outworks, and bravely had the garrison defended the position that was entrusted to them. The light Arab and the Moorish cavalry had constantly hung, in clouds, upon the camp of the Christians — cutting off stragglers and supporting the sallies by which Sinan frequently interrupted the works and repelled his aggressors to a greater distance. Gallantly did the renegade Jew bear himself in his important command; and not less gallantly did the garrison undergo every arduous service which he proposed to them. Barbarossa was still unwilling to risk a general engagement; although the constant play of the artillery from the batteries on the land and from the fleet began to produce some effect upon the walls of the castle. The besiegers strove under the eye of the Emperor, in a cause in which they deemed

it to be meritorious of heaven to shed their blood: no wonder, therefore, that they exerted themselves with unwonted ardour. National emulation, also, excited the different bodies of the army to outdo one another and to win renown for their own country.

The Emperor was at supper in the tent of the Constable, del Vasto: the principal knights and nobles were present and waited upon him. The talk was, of course, of the fortress; and each one freely gave his opinion. National antipathies began to manifest themselves, and high words arose. Was it more foolish for a knight to assert the superior valour of his country than the superior beauty of his mistress?

"Nobles and knights," said the Emperor, "we know no distinctions of nations here. We are proud to say that we ourselves belong exclusively to neither Spain, Germany, nor Italy; and we are proud also that so many brave men of such different countries are united in brotherhood by us."

"That, your Majesty, is an honour which I may not claim," answered, with a gravity and decision beyond his years, a young English knight of noble and graceful carriage.

"God forbid," replied the Emperor, "God forbid that we should seek to deprive the country of our brother of England of the fame which must redound to it from the exploits of such a lance as yours, Sir Warren de Whittingham."

"We are all brother Christians," answered the Englishman. "We all contend against the Infidel under the banner of the Cross, which was never more nobly unfurled and supported than by your Majesty."

A murmur of applause followed this speech; for the proud men there assembled were ill-pleased to merge all national feeling in submission to one supreme ruler in the manner the Emperor had suggested; and boastful words of patriotic pretensions again began to arise. The Marquis del Vasto spoke a mo-

ment aside to Charles, and, then addressing the company, said,

“His Majesty having done upon me the unmerited honour of appointing me constable over this noble army, I am rejoiced that it is in my power to put the patriotism of each to the test, in a manner that may advance the honour of the Emperor and the cause of the Holy Church. The breaches in the fortress are now practicable towards the land. The Spaniards, the Italians, and the Germans shall each attack it in turn during the next three days. Let each one prepare to bear himself in such a manner as to support the fame of his country.”

Loud approval followed this announcement; in the midst of which the Count of Procida, stepping forward, exclaimed with earnestness, “Deign, your Majesty, to permit the Italians to make the first assault.”

“You intrude your advice somewhat boldly, sir Count,” observed del Vasto, displeased at this appeal to the Emperor in a matter of

which he himself had the direction; and still more displeased that it should be made by one whom he had injured and, therefore, disliked.

"If my friend is bold," retorted the Prince of Salerno passing his hand through the arm of Alfonso, "we must recollect that he is personally interested in this war. To him, we Italians owe the safety of the lady of Gonzaga; but the gallantry which saved her was fatal to himself."

"We have heard of it," said the Emperor, and have marked his daring exertions during the siege."

"Fortune, gentlemen, must assign to each nation its turn in the assault," said del Vasto more coolly: and then calling for his helmet, tickets were prepared and shaken together in it. While this was being done, Sir Warren de Whittingham said, "Being a stranger and a volunteer, I presume, my Lord Constable, that I shall be free to join either nation with my few followers?"

"Most assuredly, Monsignore."

“Then I announce before the lots are drawn, that I shall pray the Italians to receive me in their ranks.”

The Prince of Salerno grasped the hand of the Englishman, and the lots were drawn.

“Those who would exalt themselves shall be humbled,” said del Vasto in an undertone, to the Spanish Admiral beside him. “Germany; Spain; Italy; such, noble sirs, is the order which fate awards. With the Emperor’s pleasure, therefore, the Germans shall, to-morrow, have the first chance of taking

It is not our purpose to describe these several assaults. Suffice it to say that each body of the army fought with its natural phlegm or its national fury. On the eve of the second day, the fortress was still in the hands of the brave Sinan and his garrison.

The third day dawned ; and the Prince of Salerno marshalled the Italians and congratulated them that the prize was still unwon, since it was in their power to secure it. The attack commenced with greater fury than had characterized either of the two preceding engagements. True it is that the division now engaged had rested while the others had contended ; and that the garrison was now proportionately fatigued and weakened by the assaults of the Germans and of the Spaniards : all these were arguments in favour of the brave army of the Prince of Salerno. But arguments will not take stone walls : nor will they overcome such dogged valour as was exhibited by the renegade Jew. The exertions which Barbarossa made at the head of

his cavalry, annoyed also the flanks of the besiegers; although he was constantly repelled by the heavy-armed chivalry of Europe. The fortune of the day was still undecided when Salerno once more rallied the veteran Italian infantry to the attack. Emulous for the honour of their country, they again rallied to the summons. Behind pavises and wide shields, cross-bowmen and arquebusiers again gallantly advanced: with sword in hand, the iron-clad knights pressed forwards, bearing the scaling ladders by which each hoped to be the first to plant his pennon on the towers. The ditch was passed—the foot of the ramparts was gained: the ladders were placed against the crumbling wall:—down thundered a shower of stones, arrows and bullets upon the eager besiegers. The swarthy faces of the turbanned Turks hung over the battlements and hurled every variety of implement upon the shoulders of the climbing assailants.

“On! on! my brave countrymen. Naples and San Gennaro!” cried Alfonso of Procida

eagerly mounting his ladder and waving on his followers with his sword. "Think of the captives who wait their deliverance from our valour!"

"St. George for England!" cried the volunteer knight at his side. "Think of the glory of the victor—of the blessedness of him who dies for the cross!"

Eagerly the followers of the two young men, excited by a fresh national emulation, plant their ladders against the walls. There, also, is the Prince of Salerno; there is the Count of Sarno and other nobles. Many fall: many are beaten down, wounded and slain. That discharge of huge stones has alone killed two of the best knights of Naples:—the Count of Sarno and Costanza di Costanza lie crushed in the ditch. Yet onward—upward press the others: the battlement is gained: who treads upon it first? Is it Alfonso of Procida or the Englishman? Alas, what matters it? The infidels surrender not yet. With renewed and unexpected energy, they

rush to recover their walls. The assailants are hurled back. Down — down they go. There fell a ladder with three men upon it—the Count of Aversa and his two 'squires. Gallantly the Christians fight to maintain the ground they have won: but the contest is now all too unequal. They are but a handful of men left alone on the battlements. "Back! Back!" cries the Prince, "ere your retreat be cut off!" To contend longer were indeed fruitless. Hastily they again slide down their ladders; and hastily they recross the moat.

"But see," cries the Englishman from below: "see the brave Neapolitan left alone on the walls! We must free him, my men. St. George and merry England! Shall a Neapolitan outdo an Englishman?"

With a score of sturdy troopers at his back, de Whittingham again rushed over the moat: again clomb the walls. Alfonso was surrounded;—his retreat had been cut off:—only a dozen of his followers remained around him: back to back, they contended with the

turbanned host. Many a well-tempered scimitar was there shivered upon that tried Milan armour! The band of Englishmen soon cut their way to the Neapolitans and disengaged them from their foes: slowly they retreated together to their ladders: with their pavises held over their helmets to ward off the falling stones, slowly they descended to the moat, and crossed over it in serried ranks.

A cheer of applause and triumph was upraised by the rest of the army which had now drawn off from the attack.

"A more noble feat," said the Emperor to the two champions, "never closed a three days' contest! Count of Procida we shall rejoice to testify to you that we appreciate your conduct: to this noble foreigner, we can but offer our warmest approbation. Gentleman all," he continued turning to those around, "the walls have been won: but tomorrow they must be won and kept. Constable del Vasto, we request you to let the artillery play upon them throughout this

as he had been invited Alfonso to return with
Admiration and gratitude drew
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anchor. The firing, which had continued throughout the night between the besiegers and the fortress, ceased: thick clouds of smoke rolled away to the eastward, and intercepted, for a while, the horizontal rays of the rising sun. They gradually dispersed; and the bright orb of day—how bright in those once-favoured regions!—glanced upon the scene of action. Then was heard the outburst of martial music; then was seen the gathering of the European hosts. The ordering of the force, indeed, could not be distinctly seen; but the reflection of the sun as it occasionally glanced upon the tips of the lances, upon the corslets of the troopers, and upon the polished helmets of the knights, indicated where the masses were marshalled together, and their regular advances upon the point of attack. Banners, unfurled and shivering in the wind, showed the glint of their or and argent bearings.

Thus were a couple of hours spent in breathless suspense. How strange, thought

Consalvo, that the Infidels do not sally from the fort and interrupt all these stately preparations! Not a moving figure, however, was seen along the contested and shattered battlements: all there lay as still as a mine ere the train is fired. At length, the preparations seemed to be completed on the part of the Christians: on the side of the land, the fort was hemmed in by their serried ranks: to seaward, the galleys, under the command of Doria, had taken up their position as near as possible to the walls. Suddenly uprose a loud burst of music; and, with a cheer of defiance, in which thirty thousand voices blended their pent-up ardour, the glittering masses simultaneously rushed on.

Not a cannon from the battered fortress replied to that cheer or checked that advance. But see what is yonder object slowly moving over the glistening water of the harbour? It must be so:—it is! it is! From a low-browed portal, on the southern, or inner, side of the fortress, the remains of the brave Turkish garrison slowly issue. Carrying their wound-

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 there is the brave rene-
 last of that mournful pro-
 , Sinan, hast thou done thy
 y has thy garrison supported
 invaders possess the naked and
 alls :—and see, they already do
 the cross of the church floats be-
 aperial standard on those deserted
 But not a Christian knight in all
 at but envies the feeling of stern ex-
 with which thou and thy dripping
 s at length tread out upon dry land,
 eive the praises of your dread chief-
 rbarossa.

“Victory ! victory !” cried Consalvo falling on his knees on the battlements of the citadel when he saw the banners of the Christians wave over the Goletta. “Victory ! victory ! Glory be to God on high !”

He started again to his feet ; and grasping his tall cross with both hands by its iron-shod base, he raised it in the air above his head and slowly waved it in the bright sunshine—either as a signal to the Christian host or as a repetition of the triumphant banners they exhibited. The few Moorish soldiers and keepers around, were too much interested in watching the scene below to heed this action of the Recluse ; or if they did chance to perceive it, they only considered the vehemence of one usually so staid, as a further symptom of that mental derangement which was sure to meet with their respect and sympathy.

After a few moments thus given to prayer and exultation, Consalvo abruptly turned him away, and hastily descended from the lofty rampart. The Seraglio of the Pacha was

situated just beneath the walls of the citadel: he quickly entered its deserted courts and sought the well-known harem of Isidora.

"Victory, child ! Victory !" he cried. "The banners of the Lord wave over the Goletta !"

"Thank God, thank God ! Let us go then, padre Consalvo ; let us fly to them !"

"Calm thyself, Isidora," exclaimed the Recluse, seizing her hand to stay her while his own every limb trembled with excitement. "Calm thyself. They have but taken a fortress ; but it is a propitious omen, and the tyrant attached much importance to it."

"When, then, shall we be freed ?" asked the captive, sinking upon her pile of cushions in renewed despondency.

"In God's time. No doubt the Emperor will march forthwith upon this accursed town. Do thou but still strive to gain time ; and, above all things, resist any attempt of the Infidel to remove thee hence. Farewell. Say thy prayers. I go to learn what will next happen."

On leaving the harem, he again met the old dervish with whom he believed he had tacitly established an understanding.

"Brother," said the African, anxiously, "the Giours have taken the Goletta. Tell, out of the abundance of thy knowledge, what will be the event of this war."

"The Lord will protect his own," answered Consalvo solemnly. "If the Christian lady can rejoin the army, thy daughter will be without a rival in the harem of Barbarossa; and she will send thee, I swear it by this cross," he said looking reverently upon it, "she will send thee wealth enough to buy all the knowledge of the Arabs."

"Wouldst thou bribe a servant of the Prophet?" asked the Marabout angrily, although in an under tone.

"Here is a purse containing a hundred golden crowns," pursued Consalvo. "Take them: buy thee a camel with which one or the other of them may flee from the wrath that is to come. If it aid the flight of the

Christian or of thy daughter, it will avail thee equally. When the proper hour comes, thou shalt neither remain nor go empty handed."

With an assumed air of great mystery, he turned him away, while the Dervish concealed the purse in the huge sleeves of his tattered frock.

CHAPTER XII.

THE RENEGADE.

Una salus hæc est, hoc est tibi pervincendum.
Hoc facito, sive id non pote, sive pote.

repentance for the deed ; it was rather a surly dissatisfaction with himself and with all that had led to it—even with the memory of the unfortunate girl herself. He was saddened but he was not softened : still less was he moved from the course of action which had long been his. The only real difference in him was that, whereas he had formerly been a light-hearted villain he was now a moody villain. Formerly he had, indeed, been ready to sacrifice others to his own interests : but now he would sacrifice them even from a morbid feeling of dislike to them and to all things. His was no longer the loquacious vivacity, the pride of superior cunning which had animated every undertaking and given a zest to the accomplishment of every nefarious scheme. True it was that the desire to amass wealth, by whatever means, was still his ruling passion ; but the arts by which this was to be accomplished no longer amused his vanity. He himself was sensible of this change within him, and regretted it ;

but the regret only urged him on to more serious endeavours to secure those riches which he believed would bring back to him all his former light-heartedness and buoyancy of spirit.

He sat upon his carpet on the glacis of the citadel, overlooking the labours of the slaves and meditating upon his past and his present feelings. He no longer ordered those stripes, of which he had before been so lavish, to be inflicted upon the captives; for he felt that he was, in some degree, in their power;—that a compact existed between them and him;—that he had taken wages of them for the betrayal of his sovereign.

“Fool that I was!” he considered within himself. “The spoils of the wretches were scarcely worth the risk. ’Tis true that they promise largely what they will do when once they return to Christendom: but how shall I then enforce my claim? Dispersed as they will be in different countries, how shall I then call upon them individually to fulfil the pro-

mises they have made? How even could I venture to set foot again in Italy? A renegade:—and, even if that were got over, the old scores will still remain to be cleared off. The murder of that cursed girl; the attempt to carry off Donna Giulia; and all that which my evil fate, the Iettatore, will hasten to lay to my charge. No—no: Africa must be henceforth my home. If Barbarossa be defeated, I can secure the girl and treat for her ransom with the Count; if he conquer, I must succeed with his success. The offers of these beggarly slaves must be no longer thought of. Would that I had reported them at once! It is now some days since; and if they complain of me, as they will do when they find that I have deserted their cause, the bowstring and my neck will be soon acquainted. This must be guarded against:—this must be guarded against.”

Again he sunk into meditation too deep to frame itself into even unspoken language. After half an hour, he started to his feet.

"It must be so!" he exclaimed. "Either they or I!"

He hastened from the citadel and sought the adjoining palace of the Pacha.

Barbarossa had but lately returned from witnessing the evacuation of the Goletta and the capture of his fleet; which, moored within the harbour, had fallen, at once, into the hands of the victors. He was anxious, excited, and irritated: and moved about the hall with a fitful irregularity, little suited to his assumed eastern gravity of deportment.

Yet those rapid movements were but the index to the thoughts which thronged his brain; the index to the decisions which he was rapidly adopting as to the measures to be now taken for the defence of his country. The renegade entered the hall with a timid and hesitating feeling which he strove to disguise under a mask of frankness and that volubility of language which he had so much prized in former times. But the effort was

forced. The spirit and the hope was no longer buoyant within him; daring alone remained; — the daring of the bull-dog.

He had stood some minutes within the doorway before Barbarossa noticed him. At length he did so; and exclaimed in more conciliatory tones than the visitor had expected, "Well; what now, Ibraim Aga?"

"I trust your Highness will believe that I have your prosperity and the good of my adopted country at heart?" humbly suggested the renegade.

"I see no reason to doubt it;" answered the corsair, grimly-smiling. "We know not, in faith, what kingdom in Europe would receive thee did Africa return thee upon their hands."

"True. I have incurred much enmity for the sake of your highness."

"For our sake? How meanest thou, sirrah?"

"To place in the power of your Highness the lady Isidora, I have renounced kin,

country and faith," answered Bernardo, with tones of hypocritical resignation.

"In faith, we are beholden to thee in that matter," replied the Pacha; "and when we shall have driven back these proud invaders, thou shalt be rewarded still more. But, in fine, what wouldest thou now? We have called a council of our chieftains, and they await our presence."

"Nor would I lightly have intruded myself at a moment so critical. It is only the danger of the times that has brought me hither. It is rumoured that your Highness will go forth to offer battle to the invaders. You will, doubtless, send all the troops that can be collected to the field. Have you no fear of the slaves?"

"The slaves? How meanest thou? They are in the citadel."

"But the garrison is small; and holds itself in readiness to march with the other troops."

"Well!" exclaimed Barbarossa now fully

excited, "Speak out, in the name of the Prophet."

"I cannot alone restrain ten thousand captives, panting for their freedom."

"There is danger, I admit," said the corsair. "What is to be done?"

"I suggest the doubt to your Highness," answered Bernardo. "It is not for your servant to do more."

"Speak out, in the name of Satan. Thou hast some scheme in thy head; and we have no time to solve riddles."

"The wretches will do anything to free themselves," continued Bernardo; and then thinking that, in the excitement of the moment he might venture to repair his former error, he added, "They have even attempted to bribe me, their keeper, with a set of small trinkets and coins which they had managed to conceal. I knew my duty too well not to possess myself of their secret hordes for the service of your Highness."

"Keep them thyself; so that thou wilt but

propose thy scheme to avert the danger thou namest."

"Ten thousand men, even unarmed and confined, will require a large body of troops to guard them," resumed Bernardo. "It is said also that there are full ten thousand more dispersed in the city—the property of individuals. But those in the citadel are the property of your Highness. If you would keep them, I would suggest that you should leave some of the best Turkish troops behind you when you go forth. They are Christians and desperate men. The Moors would fly from the very glance of their eyes."

"We have no troops to spare: most assuredly, none of the Sultan's," answered Barbarossa.

"Then I fear me it would be wiser to make the sacrifice; although their ransom would equip an army," said Bernardo with a manner in which frankness and mystery were strangely blended.

The Pacha gazed at him hard and fixedly

for a couple of minutes : by a mighty effort, the renegade forced his eye not to quail beneath that searching glance, but answered to its varying expression with deeper and deeper meaning. At length the Pacha spoke.

"Do I understand thee?" he asked.

Bernardo silently touched the hilt of his scimitar.

"Follow me to the council," said Barbarossa; and quickly left the room, as one whose determination was taken.

Motley was the group assembled in earnest discussion in the large council-chamber which five glittering chiosks brilliantly illuminated. There were the leaders of the highly-disciplined Turkish auxiliaries, with the steady, determined look of tried soldiers; there were the native princes of the interior of Africa who had led their erratic followers to oppose the foreign invaders: there were the sun-burnt chieftains of Tafilat and Tripoli: there were the dark leaders of the Moorish cavalry of the Emperor of Morocco:

there was the warlike Pacha of Fez—long used to contend with the Spanish settlers at Oran: there were the leaders of the warlike Bedouins and of the unconquerable tribes of the Kabyles—wrapped in their coarse burnouses and gesticulating with all the vivacity of native Arabians. All gladly greeted the entrance of the usurper of the fairest portion of their country, and declared themselves willing to place themselves and their troops under his experienced guidance. Barbarossa graciously thanked them for the anxiety they testified, “not so much,” he said, “he well knew, on his own account as to repel the Nazarenes from their native shores, and to drive back with them the infamous pretender to the throne of Tunis who had not scrupled to ally himself with the enemies of the Prophet and to introduce them into his native country. But now, my gallant and noble friends,” continued the Corsair with the frank straight-forward manner of a sailor, “now it behoves us to determine what is next to be done to defend our mosques and our

harems from the pollution of the invaders—may their fathers' graves be defiled! The Goletta has, at length, been taken, after a resistance which will crown my brave follower here, Sinan, with glory and with reward. The Franks will now, doubtless, march on to invest Tunis with their legions. What think ye?"

"The position is strong," said the grim-visaged Bey of Constantineh; "give me good stone walls behind which to fight!"

"True," resumed Barbarossa; "but stone-walls are not impregnable, as even Sinan must admit. The only unconquerable barrier is a courageous heart battling for its country."

"Say on, say on. By Allah, but you speak well!" exclaimed several voices.

"I say then," continued the Pacha, "that the walls of Tunis are too extensive to be well defended; that the inhabitants are ill-disposed to sustain a lengthened siege; and that, however willing our African allies now are to support our quarrel, yet their troops

have not that steady discipline which would lead them to lie for months round a beleaguered city."

"Surely not, surely not; they must return to their tents and to their gallies."

"Therefore," resumed Barbarossa, "therefore I propose that we go forth to meet these proud invaders: that we marshal forthwith our gallant forces; upwards of fifty thousand combatants will crowd beneath our rustling banners. We are double the number of our adversaries: we fight for our country; for the faith of the prophet. Think ye that Allah will desert his own?"

"Allah il Allah! well said, well said!" replied all the assemblage, well pleased at the proposal. "Let us drive them, at once, into the sea. You are the leader; we place our souls in your hands."

"I thank ye, my friends; and in the name of the Prophet I will lead ye to victory. I would, however, ask your opinion in a matter concerning the Nazarene slaves. There are

many of them, as ye all know, dispersed in the houses of true believers; but I have still ten thousand who have neither been ransomed nor disposed of. I have had them removed to the citadel; but their keeper, Ibraim Aga, who is here present, fears lest they should mutiny while we are absent from the town. There is wisdom in his words. We cannot leave sufficient guards behind us to restrain them. What say ye then? Were it not wise to massacre the whole lot before we march forth?"

Those whom the tyrant addressed were not famed for gentle-heartedness. There was not one of them who would have hesitated to slaughter the old and the infirm of a captured caravan, or to throw overboard the crew of a conquered merchant vessel, but this proposal of wholesale butchery startled even them.

"Kill them all?" exclaimed one. "Ten thousand, at once!" cried another. "No! no! no!" insisted several voices. "We are not women; but this were too much."

"Bethink ye before ye decide," insisted Barbarossa. "Bethink ye that we march forth of the town to encounter the Frankish army: that we shall leave an army of slaves behind us: all panting for freedom, panting for revenge. If they should chance to overpower their keepers, we shall have placed ourselves between two fires."

"No! no! no!" interposed many of the native chieftains.

"It is only my loss," insisted Barbarossa: "they are the captives of my galleys but I wish to sacrifice them for the public good. And, after all, what are they? slaves, Franks, Nazarenes! Shall the good of a single Moslem be hazarded for ten thousand such?"

"No! no! It must not be!" exclaimed the officers turning to one another. "The world would cry shame upon us. Were there only a few, it would not be worth thinking of: but ten thousand!—It would be a butchery!"

"Have it then your own way," said Bar-

barossa, much displeased at the unlooked for humanity and resistance of his council. "Since ye so resolve, it must be so : but your faint-heartedness misleads ye."

"See if we are faint-hearted on the field of battle !" exclaimed the fierce Abd-el-Kader, the leader of the Kabyles.

"There I doubt ye not, my friends," answered the Pacha, endeavouring to lull his resentment and to re-establish the harmony which his proposal had, in some degree, broken. "This very night, therefore, let every one collect his forces and prepare to march out towards the invaders. Great will be the spoil of the Infidel camp ; may it enrich those who will most deserve it ! to them Barbarossa resigns his share."

Loud applause greeted this announcement ; and the party soon after separated, that each might prepare his followers to march forth with the rising of the moon.

And whither could the fierce tyrant, thus foiled in his bloody proposal, betake him to

recover that serenity of mind which the resistance of his allies had disturbed? He went straightway to his harem; he sought his consolation in the company of Isidora. She was not in her usual apartment, and he passed out to the little parterre of flowers, surrounded by a wall covered with creepers and over-topped with gilt lattice work, so that no presumptuous eye might behold the hidden beauties within. There the lovely Neapolitan reclined beside the white marble basin of a fountain; and thoughtlessly and sadly followed with her eyes the unceasing gyrations of the gold fish, imprisoned like herself. Barbarossa approached her softly; and, seating himself upon the edge of the fountain, gently withdrew the fair hand on which her head heavily rested.

"Start not," he said in the soothing tones of affection; "start not, beloved Isidora, nor seek to withdraw this cherished hand. This is the first, and, perchance, the last time that I may grasp it: deny me not a pleasure of

which I have dreamed for hours. Yes; for hours, have I imagined to myself the bliss of pressing this dear hand."

"This avowal is scarcely seemly, your Highness;" answered Isidora, striving to withdraw her arm.

"Nay then, I would not displease thee, in what may be our last interview," he said, as he loosed those delicate fingers after he had, however, pressed them to his burning lips. "Isidora, thy friends are marching towards Tunis: this very night I lead forth my army to meet them. To-morrow must decide my fate."

"Great God—and mine!" exclaimed the captive looking up.

"And wilt thou pray to thy God to fight with the Christian host, or with mine?" asked Barbarossa with energy. "Oh promise me to intercede against me: such prayers as these must be surely heard: promise me that thou wilt not exert them to my destruction, but rather for my success."

glad to know him, and
past; but a captive must
success of her deliverers."

"What, then, have all my
fruitless?" exclaimed the
"Have I renounced the name
prince; have I controuled
have I loved, timidly and
maiden dreams of love and
harem of her mother; have
towards thee the bearing of
a Christian knight—and is
moved towards me! Where
fore is this?"

"I have said, Prince,
maiden cannot receive the
heathen."

tween us," he added. "But although my distant worship of thee must now cease, I repine not at the hours I have fruitlessly spent beside thee. They have been the sweetest hours of a troubled life. And I had dreamed that such would be continued to me. I had dreamed that after a day of toil, of anxiety, or of battle, I might return hither and find that calm of which all else bereaves me. I had dreamed that it would be sweet to think, amid every care and every pain, that I possessed one whom those cares and pains could never affect; one whom I would nurture as a child too pure and too tender to be told of all the harsh doings of the outer world; one whose heart would be ever calm and gladsome, and able to impart its own blessed feelings to my wearied soul. Such, lady, had been my dreams. I know not whether a Christian knight would feel otherwise, or if a Christian woman would require other worship from her husband. But such are the

feelings that I have taught myself while gazing and thinking on thee."

"Alas, Prince, wherefore will you cherish unhappiness for yourself and for me?"

"And would such a life as I have dreamed of be really unhappiness? I had fancied that thy heart was moved towards me, until this late invasion of the Nazarenes. They have brought back old hopes to thy breast. To-morrow's sun shall dissipate them! When they are once repelled from the sands of Africa, thou wilt forget them again. To-morrow,

“Spare thee what, Isidora?” expostulated the Pacha in a harder and more commanding tone than he had ever used towards her. “Spare thee the avowal of an affection which ought to delight thy very soul: spare thee the assurance that thou shalt wed one to whom the Sultan himself would not deny his daughter? Away with such vain language and vainer tears! we have sought thee with an assiduity ill becoming the conqueror of kingdoms. We have offered even to wed thee as our lawful wife wouldst thou embrace the holy doctrines of Mahomet. Make thine election; but we follow this dalliance no longer. To-morrow’s sun shall see the proud invaders driven back to their ships: and to-morrow’s sun shall make Barbarossa lord of his own harem, as he is lord and sovereign elsewhere. Fare thee well. Think wisely of that which is offered to thee, and let those lips next greet me with smiles and with gladness. Nay,” he continued returning ere he reached the door and casting his arm round her waist,

"I will not quit these walls again without showing thee that thou art in my power."

He bound down her arms in his iron grasp and pressed his lips upon hers with more of sternness than of affection.

"Now thou hast a token of what thou hast to fear, as well as what to hope," he said as he turned away and slowly re-entered the palace.

Oh, how the spirit awoke within the heaving bosom of the captive at this unexpected insult ! She drew herself up into the rigidity of marble ; her eyes flashed fire ; she stamped with her little foot ; and, dashing her hand into the fountain, drew the moisture across those polluted lips, which were absolutely livid with anger. Vows of vengeance and fierce and contradictory resolves boiled up within her ; and for a quarter of an hour, the mind of Barbarossa himself was not more bloody than that of his gentle captive. In one quarter of an hour, however, all these feelings, so foreign to her nature, began

gradually to subside: she slowly re-entered her room; and casting herself upon her knees, prayed forgiveness for the momentary outburst and for guidance and support under the dangers with which she was threatened. Then followed the blessed effects of fervent prayer: her heart was softened; tears relieved her pent-up feelings; and hope breathed solace to her fears. Oh would she not pray for the success of the Christian arms! Long and fervently she prayed; and again and again she cast herself upon her knees and renewed her vows and the eager aspirations of her soul. Never was prayer more intense; never was the assistance of heaven more needed.

CHAPTER 2

THE BATTI

Thus—as the stream and ocean
With waves that madden as th
Thus join the bands whom mu
And fate and fury drive along.
The bickering sabres shivering
And pealing wide or ringing nea
Its echoes on the throbbing ear,
The death-shot hissing from afar
The shock, the shout, the groans
Reverberate along that vale.

Some attempts were made by the 1
reduce Algiers and Tunis: but they—

chapter, we have seen that the imperial army did, at all events, capture the fortress of the Goletta. Then began that march towards Tunis across those arid sands—heated by the burning sun of July. The ample stores which they had hitherto derived from the fleet, now no longer availed them; and for the first time the troops suffered from that most grievous of hardships—the want of water. Onward, however, they toiled; their line of march formed into battle array,—and few, indeed, were there who would not rather have had to cut their way through an army of Moslems, than bear idly the encumbrance of their steel armour, heated as it soon became by the perpendicular rays of the sun. The heavily-armed knights suffered more on this account than the common men: their chargers also began to flag beneath the scorching weight of their steel saddles and cumbrous defences.

Suddenly as they rose upon a mound of sand, the gay army of Barbarossa was seen pouring onwards to meet them. A shout of

blow; of winning fame, he
religious merit. The Com
caused the army to halt w
made his last preparations f
heathens came on in so gal
was evident a general en
ensue. He placed his we
veteran infantry in one conc
the centre; on the two win
at-arms and the gallant cl
from every part of Christen
already, with their spurs,
slumbering metal of their cha
came the Infidels in a somew
the Turkish auxiliaries and t
of Barbarossa were flanked c
body of cavalry as numero

THE BATTLE.

invaders, and bury them within its thousands as easily as the sands of their native deserts had heretofore annihilated a conqueror and his pride.

Alfonso of Procida and the English knight, Sir Warren de Whittingham, in whom the incidents of the assault on Goletta had promoted feelings of gratitude and animation which already bound them as brothers in arms were then wont to be bound, rode with the Italian cavalry on the right of the Christian host. Each had a couple of hundred stout troopers at his back, who owned the banner of their lord as their rallying point, his will as their only rule. The worldly rank and wealth of the one and the personal interest which the other felt in the success of the campaign, had urged each to collect this goodly array; nor were any men-at-arms in the army better mounted or more gallantly equipped. Each knight took his lance from his squire; and, placing it in rest upon his plated boot, awaited the onset of the foe.

And soon they came thundering on. The light Moorish and Arab cavalry, elated by the sight of their own numbers and of the comparatively - insignificant squadrons of the Christians, dashed on tumultuously to the attack. Del Vasto put his army into motion, and down rushed those serried ranks, with a regular and steady impetus. Steed encountered steed; the heavy European charger pressed down upon the beautiful, but slight, barb of the desert: lance crossed lance and sparks of fire were emitted from the blow: but onward,

strokes of the two knights. Soon were the latter involved deep among the turbanned host; and onward still they cut their way, without once looking back to see how many of their men-at-arms were behind them. Wherefore should they look back? Were not the Infidels around them and before them?—and did they not see beyond that gorgeous plain of moving turbans, the walls of Tunis, the towers of the citadel in which Alfonso believed that she for whom he fought was imprisoned? No wonder, then, that, animated by such motives, they should still have pushed and hacked their way through the extended wing of Moorish cavalry opposed to them. We record no uncommon feat of arms: without adducing the romances of the times to vouch for the possibility of the adventure, we may state that the most veracious historian, Froissart, tells how, at the fatal battle of Nicopolis, two Christian knights cut their way through the whole of the immense army of Bajazet. Nor is the feat to be wondered

at: steel was opposed to silk; iron head-pieces to linen turbans. In very truth, a well-armed knight in those wars needed but an untiring limb!

The two brothers in arms stood, therefore, at the back of the wing of the Arab army through which they had carved their road. They reined in their foaming steeds; and, for the first time, looked behind them. One of the body-squires of the English knight and about a score of the best mounted followers of them both were at their heels—panting and

proud figure of Barbarossa—whom the friends did not, indeed, recognise, although they well marked the unwearied flashing of that bloody scimitar, the incessant exertions and the prodigies of valour by which the noble Heathen encouraged and set an example to his troops.

“That must be the Infidel corsair himself,” ejaculated de Whittingham; “and, by heavens, he seems to bear himself gallantly! But now that we have breathed our horses, let us wheel round and cut our way back again to the Christian host.”

“Not so! not so!” exclaimed the Count of Procida. “We have fought together thus far, and I do intreat you, noble stranger, to support me in that on which I have resolved. You know the hopes with which I have joined this war; but were I interested in no individual captive, ten thousand Christian slaves, as we are told, await their deliverance from yonder citadel.”

“They will be delivered,” answered the Englishman. “Let us only return and put

be scattered," said Alfonso
possible that they may main
They are treble our number
yonder city must be now
will not await until even
the Pagan army return to
perhaps, to carry further into
whom I seek. And see," he
sionately, "see the sun glanc
cross upon the tower of the
same that I thought I had d
terday. I will now swear
cross of the Holy Recluse I
and the lady de' Massimi mu
yonder citadel. With the b
Januarius, I will on and
perish beneath its walls."

knights this day. I only wish that we had all our fine fellows to support us in our onset: nor do I like leaving them alone in yonder crowd."

"They are tried men, and will not require our guidance," answered Alfonso; "nor do I fear to push onwards with the score who are now around us. They are composed about equally of your followers and of mine. Let us on, in the name of God."

"Amen," answered de Whittingham.

Before starting, however, upon their wild and rash expedition, the two knights and all their followers dismounted and tightened the girths of their saddles and the straps of their own armour. They then enjoined the strictest silence upon their men; and, encouraging them with the prospect of honour and the promise of reward, they again mounted their war-horses and set off, at a steady gallop, towards the towering citadel. They took care to ride along the hollows in the sand-banks, and to follow every sinuosity of the ground, so as to advance, as far as possible, without

did they see any living thi
the herds of hungry jackals
vines, and, now and then, a v
with its empty saddle, as it
with snorting and fiery r
covered flanks, and sped h
field of battle. The din of
faintly and more faint, as
turers drew nigh to the w

CHAPTER XIV.

THE SLAVES.

Non dee temer del mondo affanni o guerra
Colui c'have col ciel tranquilla pace :—
Che noce il gelo a quel ch' entro la face
Del calor vero si rinchiudi e serra ?—
Non preme il grave peso della terra
Lo spirito che vola alto e vivace.
Ne fan biasmo l' ingiurie a l' huom che tace
E prega più per chi più pecca ed erra.
Non giova saettar presso o lontano
Torre fondata in quella viva pietra,
Ch' ogni edificio human vive sicuro.
Ne tender reti con accorta mano
Fra l' aer basso, paludoso, e scuro
Contra l' augel che sopra 'l ciel penetra.

VITTORIA COLONNA.

As the Count of Procida had imagined, the
city of Tunis and the citadel had been left

the departure of Barbaros:
The inhabitants of this, the
civilized of the states of Ba
the rule of the tyrant who ha
supplanted their native so
placed them under the domir
of Constantinople. Like A
saw the probability that the
would not be so decisive a
war at once ; and they unwill
a siege which should enclose
army of Barbarossa within
ultimately, perhaps, betray
families to the fury of the vi
troops. Not many hours
elapsed after the departure

gradually had they formed their resolution not to abide the fortune of the engagement. The mob was easily incited to rise and take possession of one of the gates of the city; and soon the more wealthy inhabitants began to remove, through it, their families and their more valuable goods, and to betake them to the neighbouring towns, there to await the course of events.

Nor had less excitement and insubordination manifested itself in the citadel among the reduced garrison and the impatient Christian slaves. These latter had eagerly surrounded Bernardo Accorto and had urged him to fulfil his promise and to unlock their fetters. Evasive replies were, at first, given by the Renegade; but as the violence of the captives increased, so also did their keeper throw off the mask and avow his treachery.

"You took our presents, you took all the little remembrances which we had treasured up to remind us of former days. And you swore that you would release us," expostulated the Ischian promoter of the plot.

"No time can be better
persisted the slaves.

"The garrison has been

"The town is in an uproar

"He will betray us, and
poor wretch more despond

"the holy bearer of the cross
would betray us."

"May treachery blast you
to boot!" cried Bernardo
mention of him he dreaded
prophet's words *shall* come
"since ye have such faith
pity to balk your humour

"Renegade as thou art,
so base!" exclaimed the Is
own honour staked in it

been followed the Pacha would not have left one of ye alive when he marched forth from the town."

"Villain!" "Robber!" "Renegade!" "Traitor!" were the mildest terms that broke forth from the angry throng who lay in fetters before him. Bernardo folded his arms across his chest and looked at them with a withering smile of scorn, gratification and hatred. At length he held up his hand in an imposing manner, and commanded silence. The appeal was obeyed. He touched the hilt of his yataghan and, in a calm but significant tone, added, "But it is not yet too late."

He turned him and left the court-yard; ordering the under-keepers, as he passed, to drive the captives back to the vault in which they were confined at night, and to iron them more closely than ever.

The approval of his conduct which he had recently received from Barbarossa had, indeed, encouraged Bernardo Accorto to avow his treachery to the slaves more openly than he

to wear him from the serv-
until he should be able to
of Isidora and hold her for
should satisfy even his graspy
of these resolves, he was ret
quarters in the citadel when
Turkish garrison, which had
tumultuously assembled arou
of the fortress and disputin
who had been left in comma
score of native Arab soldier
gregated hard by, and listeni
sion, without, however, takin
Bernardo went down to the
the meaning of the mutiny.

“Nay, Ibraim Aga,” replie
he addressed; “one can sca

with the Nazarenes just beyond the hills ; and that the camp of the Emperor, with all the wealth of the new world that men talk of, will surely fall into their power."

"And the rascals wish to have a share in despoiling it?" interposed Bernardo, immediately apprehending the case.

"True, Aga ; and their officers are ordering them to stay and guard the citadel which has been entrusted to them. By the tomb of the prophet, but we Arabs think this is the safer place!"

This was added in such a tone that the keeper well understood that the sentiment was not prompted by cowardice, but by that national aversion which most of the native Africans felt to the usurpation and the service of the Corsair. He turned him to mark the progress of the mutiny.

"By the beard of the prophet," exclaimed one who seemed to be the ringleader, addressing the officers in a loud tone, "by the beard of the prophet, we would not offend you ; but

Thus threatened, the of
sisted. The portcullis wa
bridge was dropped across
whole party looked out on
velly esplanade which alv
resses from the surround
town lay away beneath the
separated from the citadel
ing palace and gardens o
mutineers gave a tumult
drawbridge fell upon th
and, springing into their
to sally forth and seek
battle.

Not a hundred of them,
sed over the drawbridge w
olive and orange trees the

Whether they had been concealed any time among the trees while reconnoitering the citadel, or whether they had not drawn bridle since we left them on their way from the field of battle, their appearance was equally unexpected and startling to the mutinous heroes. Hastily they grasped their lances by the middle, and waved them, like the *jerreid*, over their heads; but the unanimity with which they cried out that the whole army of the Franks was upon them, showed that they had little heart to encounter the imagined host. But a slight resistance delayed the course of the Europeans; who, without pausing to pursue those who fled, or to attack those who avoided them, rushed on to secure the draw-bridge and the gateway of the citadel. This was easily effected; and beneath the broad archway, our adventurers, at length, checked their career and considered what was to be next done. But a few score of the mutinous Turkish garrison remained within the court;

at random through the
should not be molested
need to repeat the in
were they to escape from
to be a large division
army.

Such was, also, the imp
Accorto who, from the pl
with his Arab soldiers, bel
onset as had passed in th
the heart of the renegad
when, from the bearing pa
of one of the knights, —
beaten by the waves—he re
lord whom he had so cru
misgivings, however, endu
ment : with the hope of tri

attire; and, calling on the Arab soldiers to follow him, he boldly went up to the portal and passed through after the Turkish garrison.

The citadel was now in the hands of the Christians; and Bernardo and the soldiers naturally supposed that the battle was lost and that the whole army was advancing upon the town: the chance of which he had foreseen the possibility having, therefore, occurred, he was at once prepared to act upon it. He checked the flight of the Arabs.

"The battle is lost," he said. "Barbarossa is probably slain. But there is no reason that either you or I should fly to the desert with empty hands. Follow me to his seraglio: there is wealth will make ye leaders of tribes. Follow me, and we will then escape together."

Her, however, whom Bernardo went to seize in the seraglio, Alfonso of Procida fondly hoped to find imprisoned in the citadel; and

seek her out among the c
covered a couple of the
lurking in the first dung
they cast themselves on
humbly prayed that their
spared.

"On consideration that
stantly to the Christian capti
with nervous agitation.

He had not far to go. E
store was filled with them.
joy and of gratitude, what co
and hysteric sobs broke fort
able wretches when they first
warriors and believed their c
certain! Alfonso made a si

first delivered bounded to their feet and exclaiming "More keys!" "More keys!" hastened to the lodge of the keeper and returned laden with the implements which might loose the fetters of their fellow prisoners. Hundreds were now set free in a few minutes, and began to exhibit their joy in prayers or in light-hearted raillery, according to their natural dispositions and the effect of their previous sufferings. Sir Warren de Whittingham, however, checked this untimely sense of security.

"The battle is not yet won," he said; "the citadel may be re-taken any moment. Hasten to the battlements: man the guns: some of you must know something of war. Your own safety and the success of the undertaking now depend upon yourselves. Quick; seek out the armoury: arm yourselves as fast as you are unfettered: turn the cannon upon the city, and threaten to fire upon it if the Turks offer to molest you."

These directions were punctually and joy-

fully fulfilled : and the citadel was soon garrisoned by ten thousand Christians elated with the strength and the courage which the sense of newly-recovered freedom could not fail to bestow.

It is needless to inform the reader that all Alfonso of Procida's researches for Isidora amongst the captives proved fruitless. Yet so persuaded was he that she must be confined in the citadel, that much precious time elapsed ere he was convinced of the uselessness of further enquiries. Vainly he had visited

"In the harem of the seraglio."

Not many minutes elapsed before his troopers were again collected and he sallied forth from the gate of the citadel.

CHAPTER XV

THE MOB.

Look, as I blow this feather fr
And as the air blows it to me
Obeying with my wind when I
And yielding to another when
Commanded always by the grea
Such is the likeness of your con

It was no deception of the im

del. Thither, in fact, he had bent his steps with the early dawn ; and passing through the groups who already began to congregate tumultuously in the streets, but who moved aside at his approach, with that mixture of dread and of reverence which the contradictory reports of Bernardo and of the Dervish had engendered towards him,—he had taken up the same position on the lofty watch-tower which he had occupied during the greater part of the preceding days. His mind had become more and more excited as what he believed to be the crisis of the fate of himself and of the young girl in whom he so much interested himself, approached ; and the only assuagement he was capable of feeling was derived from the expansive view that was spread out before him from the summit of the citadel. Here had he sat since day-break, and had marked the distant approach of the European army : the rush of the Moslems from the opposite direction ; the mingling of the masses, and the clouds of dust which soon

concealed all else from his view. Vainly he endeavoured to penetrate those envious clouds: at times, indeed, an opening might be made between the yellow billows by an irregular current of air; and then a lofty banner, the glittering point of a lance, or even the flashing of scimitars might be discerned beneath: but soon the smoky chasm was re-united, and all that toiled and strove beneath it were again concealed from his anxious gaze.

But the growing tumult in the streets be-

withdrawing Isidora and himself from the city? The thought flashed suddenly upon him; and as suddenly he resolved to attempt to execute it.

He hastily descended from the battlements; left the citadel by the wicket which was always open to the household of the Pacha; and found himself in the midst of the popular tumult. The first person whom he saw was the old Dervish surrounded by a motley crowd of devotees who sought consolation and courage from what they generally considered his oracular sentences. The Dervish, however, was now in no mood to play the prophet: he quickly separated himself from the throng of his followers, and hastened up to Consalvo so soon as he perceived his commanding figure towering above the crowd.

"What is to be done, my brother?" asked the saintly Turk in a trembling voice. "Is not the enemy coming upon us? Is not the hour propitious for flight?"

"With the blessing of God it soon will be

they should remain in the hall
be neither missed nor thought
rival was left behind. I will
her from thy path."

So saying he hastily entered
the palace. There, also, all the
Slaves were hurrying to and
Marabouts were putting up their
invoking the vengeance of
conqueror of their country.
officers of the state were making
changing a few words, and then
to give orders to which no
Consalvo rushed on to the ap-
dora. She was alone and on her
offering up her fervent orisons
from all those dangers which

"What attempt, padre Consalvo? You alarm me. Are our deliverers driven back?"

"Not yet; but up, I say: the town is in a tumult: let us strive to escape hence and to join the army."

"If you, my only protector, advise this, I will attempt it," replied Isidora shuddering; "but it seems to me fearfully dangerous."

"Come on, at once, come on!" exclaimed the Recluse seizing her hand.

"Give me but one moment," she said; and casting herself upon her knees where she had stood, she clasped her hands and gazed up to heaven with an appealing look of silent prayer. Consalvo kneeled beside her with equal fervour: then laying his tall cross upon the carpet, he devoutly bent over it and kissed its four extremities with wild energy. He signed to Isidora to do the same; and then starting to his feet and firmly grasping it with his right hand while his left was held by the trembling maiden, exclaimed in a solemn voice, "Let us go forth, hoping in the cross."

and glittering dress which was
as that which we have before d

"This will never do," he ex-
embroideries and gems and g-
too much attention from the
something over thee: here,
serve as a cloak," he add-
long African bernouse of wl
throwing it over her so as co-
her figure.

Again the two moved forw-
they left the harem: and no-
the marble courts of the palace
many whose report would
consigned them at once to the
the sack: these were now all
their own affairs to heed wh-

Consalvo now began to deem the greatest dangers were passed.

"Not so fast," he said in an under tone : "walk gently: we shall else draw attention."

That attention, however, was already drawn. Amid the thickest of the excited rabble, Bernardo Accorto and those of the Moorish soldiers whom he had persuaded to follow him after their escape from the citadel, were disputing with an old marabout for the possession of a camel which stood among them, ready caparisoned for a journey, and lifting its stupid, dreamy head far above the surrounding turbans.

"We must detain the camel," Bernardo insisted to the soldiers. "It is a God-send. It will secure our flight with one who will make our fortunes."

"But Allah il Allah, it is mine own beast: procured for the safety of my daughter!" expostulated the Dervish. "And yonder comes the great Christian Marabout who bid me to

also the closely-veiled figure w
wards at his side. It neede
divination to inform him who
surely but for one woman in T
stern bearer of the cross so i
He hastily desired the soldiers
and, accompanied by the angr
the Dervish anxious to secure t
the Recluse, he hastily crossed
space.

"Oh infamy!" exclaimed t
a tone of affected horror;
Caffre ben Caffre! (Christian
a Christian) to think of bre
harem of a true believer and
his Christian slave! Yield

"Dervish!" exclaimed Consalvo in an under tone to the Moslem who had shrunk up to his side, and it was curious to know how these two men schemed each to derive protection from the other—"Dervish, thy daughter has no chance if the Christian is borne back to the harem! rouse the people, and great shall be [thy reward!]" Then aloud he added, "Wilt thou, holy Marabout, wilt thou permit this iniquity? Wilt thou permit an infamous renegade, whom even yourselves despise, thus to insult one whose power you all well know?"

"Never!" cried the Dervish, moved alike by the hope of gain and the desire to show his power over his ignorant followers. "The renegade Ibraim lies; by the beard of the Prophet, he lies. The woman is no Christian, but a true believer. See here," he cried casting open the bernouse wrapper and pointing to the emerald-studded girdle which Isidora had never laid aside and which, it will be remembered, had attracted his own attention

self never wrought one more pe

He roughly and hastily loose
held up the girdle to the gapir
this address fixed in astonishme
salvo whispered to him "Sav
jewel is thine."

"See here," continued the
energy, renewed by the prospec
so invaluable a gem ; "see here
clasp are the revered names o
his holy Prophet ! Think ye
true believer would wear so hol
renegade lies, I tell ye : back v
with him to the hell he would e

This address had the desir
bigotted rabble, who hung upon
of their favourite Marabout :

Moorish soldiers also slunk away from him, and went to rob the palace of the Pacha on their own account — according to the hint which their new leader himself had given them. Bernardo saw that it was useless to contend further at present; and prudently, therefore, withdrew from the threatening multitude. He well knew which road the fugitives would follow in order to join the Christian host, which he knew must be their object; and, resolving to make another attempt to cut off their retreat, he now only strove to detain his Moorish partisans around him. This however was a hopeless task; where immediate plunder invited them, they would not forego its charms to follow into the desert a leader of doubtful character for an object which they could not well understand.

Consalvo Berretta, however, had not looked further than the present reprieve. Congratulating themselves that they were delivered from the machinations of the renegade, they

the direction from which Al
English knight had issued from
citadel.

The encreasing tumult in
convinced the African priest
the camel had become to the
own daughter, and the Recl
tarry to contest with him the
it. He and his beautiful char
fore, fled away on foot through
ranks of the terror-stricken mo

CHAPTER XVI.

THE CONCLUSION.

De piu intricati nodi o
Che mai ravvilupasse
La fortuna girando, ecco ad un colpo,
Quando parean più stretti
Ha pur disciolto il cielo, o maraviglie.
A la futura etade
Potran di noi faveleggiar le Scene.
Or così per ischerzo
Par che si goda il cielo
Confonder negli abissi
De' suoi segreti i semplici mortali.
Deh voi che troppo arditi
Co' vasti umani ingegni
Sperate di veder fin sovra i Cieli,
Quinci imparate omai
Che le cose del Ciel sol colui vede
Che serra gli occhi e crede.

IL CONTE G. DE' BONARELLI.

How delightful was the feeling of security
which gradually came over the fugitives as

they hastened from the scene of tumult and took their solitary path towards the Christian host! And was it then really true that they had escaped from the power of the tyrant and were on the road to rejoin those who were battling for them? Alas, they knew not that they were flying from him who had successfully made unheard-of exertions to release them, and were exposing themselves to new dangers as fearful as those from which they had fled.

They had not left the town a quarter of a mile behind them, when Consalvo, whose mind had been too much excited to form any settled plan of escape, remembered that the army of Barbarossa was between them and the Christian host; and that, whatever party conquered, they would probably fall into the hands of the Moslems returning to their city and citadel. There was but one way of avoiding the difficulty: to catch one of the riderless horses, which now began to speed by them in quick succession, and to make such a circuit as should carry them round the Infidel host to

the rear of the Christians. This was not easily effected. At length, however, the Recluse succeeded in stopping a charger whom loss of blood from some hidden wound rendered less fiery than those which had preceded it; and placing Isidora before the barded saddle, he himself quickly mounted, and again awakened the metal of the poor beast and turned its head from the stables it was seeking. Striking out over the sand hills on the left, they rapidly left the town behind them, and began to hear the din of battle advance near and more near on their right.

These were cheering sounds to the fugitives; and they were beginning confidently to hope that they should succeed in passing beyond the African army, when the good steed, which had so far borne them with the untiring spirit of its noble breed, began to flag beneath them. The wound which, in his haste, Consalvo had not discovered, had been too sorely tried by this last encreased exertion. The horse staggered, trembled, and finally fell beneath them.

ring fiercely towards them
they had just past over. E
close to them.

"The devil, at length,
and the evil eye has lost
the rider in a voice and is
fugitives well knew to be
Accorto.

The renegade rode close
they stood beside the be
charger, and quickly leap
saddle.

"Come, pretty mistress,
moving up to Isidora, "whe
or Christian, I will find you
taste:—either the brave Ba
old flame the Count of Proc

who hung fainting on his arm, and exclaimed "Never, renegade; never shalt thou touch her while I live."

"I accept the condition!" cried Bernardo fiercely drawing his fatal knife from his bosom. "Let us see whether steel is surer than lead!"

While he spoke, and before the Recluse could free himself from the encumbering weight of Isidora, who still hung on his right arm while his left was engaged with his cross, the murderer made a sudden spring and plunged the knife to its hilt in the chest of his victim.

Consalvo fell to the ground—as much from the force of the blow of the hilt and of the murderer's fist, as they smote against his ribs, as from the wound itself.

"Ha! Ha!" laughed the assassin loudly. "A good knife against charms and spells! Bernardo Accorto against the evil eye! Go now and try its power upon the devil thou hast served! Come! come! young lady, no fainting! we have scarcely time to spare for

ground and to bear her tow
trained Arab horse that wa
his side. Thus employed,
Consalvo had aroused him
been struck down by the fa
a convulsive tremor of hi
indeed, re-opened his eyes, &
the renegade carefully bus
prize from the sands. Th
spoke not: but raised hims
on his knees: the cross wa
grasped it convulsively in t
iron-shod base; and leani
backwards, swung it round
touched the ground behind
mighty effort, he recovered h
it with the full might and in

groan. His turban was crushed into his fractured skull.

"God, thou art just!" exclaimed the Recluse, with a feeling of triumph. "The cross has avenged its cause on the turban of the renegade! A steel morion would have saved him."

The effort had been too much for the wounded man; and he again fell back upon the sands.

And there lay the lovely Isidora de' Massimi—fainting and insensible, upon the arid sands of Africa; her persecutor lying dead at her side; her murdered protector stretched helpless at his feet, mingling his blood with that of his dead charger; while eighty thousand men contended in battle on the other side of the barren sand banks which scarcely screened her from their fury. Not long, however, she lay in this neglected state. Scarcely had the Arab steed of Bernardo seen his master fall, and, snorting the air, dashed off towards its accustomed home, than a body of European men-at-arms galloped up from the side of Tunis. The

knight at their head checked his war-horse, "bloody with spurring, fiery red with haste," as he came upon the desolate group we have described. Could it be? It was—it was the sainted Recluse of Caprea! He recognised that revered robe, that strange Phrygian cap, and the shattered cross of which he still firmly grasped the base. Instantly he arrested his wild speed and dismounted beside the dying man.

"Speak, padre Consalvo. It is you. Speak! speak!—where is Isidora?"

"Thank God!" faintly exclaimed the murdered man, languidly opening his eyes, "It is the voice of the Count of Procida; and she is saved. There, my son; there on the sands; I die for her, but I have saved her!"

Alfonso looked around. Could that be her he sought? Could that glittering, gorgeously-dressed woman—whose dress the open wrapper exposed to his view, be his own modest noble Isidora? Wherefore all that brocade, those jewels, those full Turkish trousers and naked ankles?"

Consalvo marked his surprise. "It is her; it is thine own," he said: "as true, as fond, as pure, as when thou didst first meet her—then as now beside the dead."

This assurance was no longer needed. Alfonso had thrown back the hood that veiled those lovely features and beheld the face that none who had once beheld could ever forget. What then must he have felt when, reanimated by the air that now fanned it, the swooning girl re-opened her darkly-fringed eye-lids and beheld her lover bending over her? With a sudden effort she recovered herself; grasped his gauntleted hand and bore it fondly to her lips. Consalvo marked the recognition and faintly murmured a prayer.

"Come hither, my children," he then said, "I have but few moments yet to live. How did the Lord, in his mercy, direct thee hither?"

"In the palace of the tyrant, I found an old Moslem with a chain in his hands which I knew had belonged to Isidora. He told me the way by which you and she had fled."

"Reward the poor heathen, my son;" continued the Recluse. "Reward him, for thou wilt have the means. Listen to me, my children. Ye know not wherefore I have taken such interest in thee, Isidora. Thou art the child of my brother:—nay more; the child of one whom I loved,—aye more than Alfonso loves thee or than man ever loved before. Thy father won her from me; and thou art like her; the very image of her own beautiful self at the same age. I left the world. I gave myself up to religion:—I vowed myself to the cross. I hoped in it, nor has it failed me. I never saw her more till I saw her in the house of death, where I joined your hands. Oh love ye, my children; love one another."

He paused, faint and with parched lips. A trooper, whom Sir Warren de Whittingham had despatched for the purpose, returned with his helmet filled with water from a fountain. The dying man drank eagerly; and his temples were bathed with the cool stream. He continued:

"Our elder brother was wealthy and was a miser—may God forgive him. He died in the sack of Rome; with all his children. I secured his hoarded wealth. Thy father was the next in age: I carried part of it to him. The siege of Naples came on. The rest of the gold is buried deep in my cell at Caprea. Thou wilt find it, Count of Procida, together with the needful writings."

A still greater degree of exhaustion now came over the wounded man; he breathed with difficulty, and the only words which he spoke seemed to be words of prayer. Sir Warren de Whittingham, who had listened with great apparent interest to the broken recital of the Recluse, now asked Alfonso, in a low voice, what was the name of the sufferer and of the beautiful girl who leaned on him for support.

"De' Massimi, Isidora de' Massimi," answered the Count with some surprise.

"I thought so," said the Englishman; "there is a greater tie of friendship between

you and me than you wot of. Dear lady," he continued addressing Isidora, "I have loved some of your family as a brother, and truly rejoice if my lance has been of any service to you."

He was interrupted by shouts of victory and bursts of martial music which uprose from the battle-field beyond the high mounds of sand. Victory, indeed, notwithstanding the historian whom we thought it good policy to quote—victory was with the Imperial host. The light Moorish and Arab troops had soon lost that fervid valour which had hurried them on to the field of battle. Their undisciplined and irregular onset had been soon repelled by the steady phalanxes and the iron chivalry of Europe. Vainly had Barbarossa, with the utmost presence of mind and by exposing his person to the greatest dangers, endeavoured to rally them: the rout had soon become so general that he himself was hurried along with them in their flight towards the city. Fortunately the current of the engagement

had driven the fugitives away from the valley in which those in whom we have interested ourselves were collected : the few stragglers who chanced to come that way quickly veered off from the score of dreaded men-at-arms who, with lance in rest, presented a bolder front than any terror-stricken runaways would have liked to meet !

In the city, Barbarossa soon found all the tumult which we have already described :—the garrison in mutiny ; the merchants hurrying away with their effects ; and the mass of the inhabitants only anxious to implore the clemency of the conqueror. In the citadel, indeed, he might have offered a prolonged resistance : but there, that which he had dreaded had come to pass ; and bitterly did he reproach himself with having listened to the false-hearted humanity of his council when he saw the walls densely garrisoned by the liberated slaves, and every cannon fully manned and pointed upon the town. We will not attempt to describe his encreased wrath

and disappointment when he found that his palace had been ransacked by the mob, and that Isidora had been carried off by the Christian marabout. With many and deeply-sworn vows never again to yield to those dictates of humanity which had occasioned his present disastrous rout, he mounted his horse and hastily fled towards Algiers.

Meanwhile the Emperor, satisfied with the easy and almost bloodless victory he had gained, and ignorant of the whole extent of his good fortune, was advancing slowly, with the precaution necessary in an enemy's country, when he came upon the mournful group around the dying Recluse of Caprea. The triumphant sound of his music and the sight of his victorious standard interrupted Sir Warren de Whittingham's further speech to Isidora. He threw himself upon his charger and spurred to meet the Emperor.

"Good news, my Lord the Emperor," he exclaimed; "good news, if your Majesty has not yet heard it; the citadel of Tunis is in the hands of the Christians."

"Good news, indeed, for a Christian sovereign" answered Charles devoutly crossing himself. "How did this come to pass?"

"The gallant Count of Procida cut his way through the Moslem host with me and a few of our followers: and, instead of returning to continue the battle, he urged me to push on with him to the citadel. We did so, and dispersed the small garrison and freed the captives and ordered them to man the walls. By Saint George, but they form a goodly garrison!"

"This is noble and knightly conduct!" exclaimed Charles in one of the few moments of enthusiasm that ever came over his cold and calculating nature. "Where is the gallant Count of Procida?" he asked.

"He is near at hand, Sire, attending on a noble Christian lady whom he has recovered from the Infidel and on a holy hermit who is dying."

"So true a knight ought not to be stigmatised as a traitor!" said Charles looking round

with a momentary glow of feeling. "Ride back to him, fair Sir, and tell him that we promise to reinstate him in all his own lands; or, if that may not be, in lands of equal value. We swear it on the cross which we have this day upheld. For yourself, noble stranger, we leave it to you to say how we can best testify our approval of your gallant conduct."

"I can prize no other reward than your Majesty's approbation and the sentiment that I have done my duty on the Infidels," answered the Englishman, in grave, if not mournful tones, as he lowly bowed his plumed helmet and turned him to ride back to the new friends whom he had left.

But, although the tumultuary conduct of the ill-fated inhabitants of Tunis had been, thus far, favourable to the escape of our heroine and to the liberation of the other Christian captives, it was destined to bear bitter fruits for themselves. Scarcely had Sir Warren de Whittingham turned him from the Emperor than "deputies arrived from the

town in order to present to him the keys of their gates and to implore his protection from military violence. While he was deliberating concerning the proper measures for this purpose, the soldiers, fearing that they should be deprived of the booty which they had expected, rushed suddenly and without orders into the town and began to kill and plunder without distinction. It was then too late to restrain their cruelty, their avarice or their licentiousness. All the outrages of which soldiers are capable in the fury of a storm, all the excesses of which men can be guilty when their passions are heightened by the contempt and hatred which difference in manners and religion inspire, were committed. Above thirty thousand of the innocent inhabitants perished in that unhappy day, and ten thousand were carried away as slaves. Muley Hascen took possession of a throne surrounded by carnage, abhorred by his subjects on whom he had brought such calamities, and pitied even by those whose rashness had been

the occasion of them. The Emperor lamented the fatal accident which had stained the lustre of his victory; and amidst such a scene of horror there was but one spectacle which afforded him any satisfaction: ten thousand Christian slaves, amongst whom were several persons of distinction, met him as he entered the town, and, falling on their knees, thanked and blessed him as their deliverer." *

But we would leave brighter images on the mind of the reader who has accompanied us thus far on our journey to "the end." The Recluse of Caprea did not, indeed, recover from the knife of the murderous renegade; but assistance both medical and ghostly was soon procured and he was carefully carried back to the tent of the Count of Procida. There, every attention was paid him by the gallant knight and by the affectionate niece for whom he had sacrificed his life: a holy priest received his latest sighs, and he died in

* Robertson's Charles V.

full reliance upon the mercies of Him whose cross he had so peculiarly honoured.

In the society of Donna Garzia of Villafranca, the daughter of the Viceroy of Naples, who had accompanied the expedition, Isidora de' Massimi found that sympathy which soon led her to forget her anxieties and all her sufferings. Together with her Moorish dress, she threw aside all the doubts and terrors which had so long embittered her existence. Within one month, the Emperor returned to Europe; and with the returning expedition, she and the Count of Procida landed in triumph at Naples. The kind-hearted Donna Giulia of Gonzaga received her friends on the quay; and laughed and cried with joy at their happy return, and with sorrow at her own petulance which had occasioned so much misery.

"And now," she said, "I insist upon it that you shall be married to-morrow when we go to the cathedral to return thanks for the victory. I never will be positive again;

but this once, I must indeed have my own way."

Neither of the lovers made much opposition to the proposal: and on the following morning, the Duchess threw over the blushing face of her friend the very veil which she had bought months ago from the pretended Jew in anticipation of the joyful event which was now really solemnized. The two old domestics, Francesca and Giuseppe, were not the least happy of all the gay company then assembled: and so soon as the ceremony was completed, the old woman sidled up to the Count, and mysteriously whispered to him, "The gold chests are all safe, thanks to San Gennaro: the cistern has never been opened."

The Emperor also fulfilled his promise to the Count of Procida; and even had he failed to do so, the treasure concealed in the cell at Caprea was found to be, as the poor Recluse had said, sufficient to purchase principalities.

With themselves and such appliances to

boot, who can entertain a doubt of the constant happiness of the lovers?

We will now conclude in the words of the English historian: "By the expedition to Tunis, the merit of which seems to have been estimated in that age rather by the apparent generosity of the undertaking, the magnificence with which it was conducted, and the success which crowned it, than by the importance of the consequences that attended it, the Emperor attained a greater height of glory than at any other period of his reign. Twenty thousand slaves whom he freed from bondage, either by his arms or by his treaty with Muley-Hascen, each of whom he clothed and furnished with the means of returning to their respective countries, spread all over Europe the fame of their benefactor's munificence, extolling his power and abilities with the exaggeration flowing from gratitude and admiration. In comparison with him the other monarchs of Europe made an inconsiderable figure. They seemed to be solicitous about

nothing but their private and particular interests; while Charles, with an elevation of sentiment which became the chief Prince in Christendom, appeared to be concerned for the honour of the Christian name and attentive to the public security and welfare."*

* Robertson.



